

# **ANALYSING HUMAN RESOURCES ACQUISITION IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY HEALTH SERVICE**

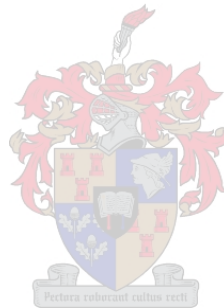
by

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## ABSTRACT

The SAMHS uses the Military Skills Development System to source candidates to join its ranks, reinforcing the Reserve Force component in contribution to fulfilling the national security mandate, and in fulfilment of its broadened role of socio-economic upliftment. This study focused on the human resource acquisition process in the SAMHS, interrogating the activities and procedures used to identify best talent among potential candidates and assessing its efficacy in aligning acquisition to employment opportunities in the SAMHS. Literature suggests that an effective, efficient and economical human resource plan, drawn within the ambit of relevant policies and guidelines and based on an ideal of professionalising the Force, is essential to facilitate the matching of potential candidates having requisite knowledge, skills, attitude and aptitude, to available organisational opportunities. The study used a convergent parallel mixed method to collect qualitative and quantitative data around the same period, and interpreted the overall results to best understand the situation. A phenomenological research approach was used to interrogate the SAMHS' human resource acquisition processes. Sampling was done mainly through analysis of various documents to gain insight and enhance understanding of the processes followed by the SAMHS and for comparison with best practice. Qualitative data was further gathered using purposive sampling, by interviewing HR functionaries to supplement data gathered from records and to obtain their perceptions about the acquisition process. The findings portrayed the annual HR acquisition process of the SAMHS as adequate for getting the quantities needed but revealed gaps in processes for soliciting and identifying suitably qualified talents. The SAMHS has further not embraced emerging recruitment and selection trends, such as technologically-based platforms which are cost effective, save time, and have the potential to drastically improve efficiency. In its endeavour to bring about change, the study recommends transformation in the SAMHS' human resource acquisition process by changing from a predominantly traditional, routine-based process, to evidence-based practice, informed by operational requirements, as well as the SAMHS' capacity to train and be aligned to the allocated budget. The change would add a dimension of quality to the HR acquisition process, making it a purposeful and intentional process aimed at getting candidates of a specific calibre to benefit the SAMHS in its endeavour to execute its mandate.

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It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end. (Ursula K. Le Gain)

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*God is, indeed, greater than the highs and lows.*

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**LIST OF ACRONYMS**

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| ADF     | Australian Defence Force                                       |
| APS     | admission point system   |
| ARRP    | Accelerated Retirement and Rejuvenation Programme              |
| CV      | Curriculum Vitae   |
| DOD     | Department of Defence  |
| DODI    | Department of Defence Instruction                              |
| DODMV   | Department of Defence and Military Veterans                    |
| ETD     | Education, Training and Development                            |
| HR      | human resource   |
| HRM     | human resource management                                      |
| HRDS-SA | Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa (2010-30) |
| ILO     | International Labour Organisation                              |
| MSDS    | Military Skills Development System                             |
| NSDP    | National Skills Development Plan                               |
| NSDS    | National Skills Development Strategy                           |
| OECD    | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development          |
| PSET    | Post School Education and Training                             |
| RegF    | Regular Force  |
| ResF    | Reserve Force  |
| RSA     | Republic of South Africa                                       |
| SAMHS   | South African Military Health Service                          |
| SANDF   | South African National Defence Force                           |

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The reputation and effectiveness of any organisation is influenced by the type of people it employs. The starting point for such employment is the attraction of potential candidates to the organisation. It is essential for organisations to attract people who will contribute towards the attainment of the strategic goals of the organisation. The human resource acquisition process is a linking process, matching potential candidates with specific qualities to available organisational vacancies. This study focused on the human resource acquisition process and analysed whether the processes and procedures were effective and done purposefully with the aim of getting members committed to serving efficiently so as to meet organisational needs. The study specifically focused on the South African Military Health Service (SAMHS) as one of the services within the South African National Defence Force (SANDF).

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996a) mandates the SANDF with the primary responsibility of defending and protecting the Republic, its people and its territorial integrity (RSA, 2002). However, its role in a developmental state expands to include the support of nation building, as an adjunct to traditional roles and functions. The Department of Defence (DOD) consists of the Defence Secretariat, the SANDF and the auxiliary service. The four services of the SANDF are the South African Army, the South African Air Force, the South African Navy and the South African Military Health Service. The SAMHS, which is the focal area of this paper, provides medical support to the SANDF personnel and their dependents. The SAMHS recruitment drive is thus more inclined towards medically-orientated Education, Training and Development (ETD) opportunities. Like other services, military training at the SAMHS equally prepares candidates for performing physically and mentally demanding tasks with an expectation of the highest possible levels of proficiency (Fletcher and Chatelier, 2000). Discipline thus remains the core value of training. The White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service (RSA, 1997) promotes the development of departmental policies within the parameters defined by national policies and advocates for a recruitment strategy which reflects positions to be filled. It further advocates for selection which is merit-based and done on the basis of the expertise, skills, personal attributes and future potential. Adopting this approach

would support the notion by Kaygin and Gulluce (2013) who believe that transformation has reshaped and changed the working life beyond traditional patterns, which has seen loyalty being replaced by opportunism with candidates being mainly in pursuit of better opportunities. Organisations thus need to have a heightened understanding of the concept of individualism and take measures to ensure objectivity and fairness during selections.

Available literature reflected a need to align human resource (HR) acquisition practices with the limited employment opportunities. The core problem was captured within the significance of the study, from which the objectives and the research questions emanated, and it was then discussed to contextualise how researchable the topic was. Through the literature review, the researcher was able to share insights obtained and various perspectives were drawn from different sources on the topic. The study adopted a mixed methods approach, using both the qualitative and quantitative approaches which enabled the researcher to get in-depth information on the topic. The next section covers the background to this study, which also provides its context.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

A skilled and dedicated workforce is critical for any country's stability and growth, especially so for a developing country like South Africa which aims to be among the top in the continent in terms of socio-economic growth and wellness. The SANDF is assigned the primary responsibility of ensuring the safety and security of the country. The White Paper on Defence (RSA, 1996b) stated among its objectives at international level the *defence of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the South African state, and the promotion of regional security in Southern Africa*. It further identified some socio-economic problems such as unemployment, poverty, crime and violence as key threats to the people of South Africa. Whilst the military was previously predominantly seen to be the providers of national security, the contemporary view of its purpose was broadened to include economic and social matters. Contributing to relieving the unemployment situation within the country was thus well within the mandate of the DOD. Kraak (2004) acknowledged the importance of the youth labour market in the development of young people. He pointed out the

desperate situation faced by the youth due to a mismatch between schooling outputs and the options for tertiary, pre-employment training or available employment opportunities.

Due to unemployment, young people either sit at home or the desperation drive some to engage in criminal activities. The socio-economic realities of South Africa, primarily its current large-scale unemployment, create a situation where young, unemployed individuals do not pursue the careers that they are passionate about, but just grab any employment opportunity for the sake of survival and the welfare of their families. This has created a situation where individuals who were never interested in the military, nor considered it as employer of choice, ended up becoming soldiers by default. For young people, entry into the SANDF has primarily been through the Military Skills Development System (MSDS), which affords them training in a military environment for two years, at the end of which some get opportunities to either further their studies, or be staffed in vacant posts, whilst those who fail to make the cut have little choice but to return to a vulnerable post-employment reality. The fact that these members who have been used to a monthly salary are back home facing unemployment is breeding ground for criminal activities. This risk is compounded by these former soldiers who went through firearm training and are known in their communities to have undergone such training, that they are an easy target for recruitment by criminal elements. In an ever-changing and rapidly changing world, it is essential to constantly improve measures meant to maintain security. It is equally important to identify those factors that could possibly compromise security. Fit for purpose recruitment was identified as a central requirement to securing the country, its people, and socio-economic activities.

The point of entry into the SANDF is the attraction of potential candidates through rather passive employment marketing strategies such as media advertising. Ideally, applicants should comprise a critical mass of citizens who choose the SANDF as an employer for their career of choice. This research hypothesised a resultant possibility of compromising organisational objectives should the organisation recruit jobseekers rather than career soldiers. Doing intelligent and objective-serving recruitment is likely to mitigate recruitment from a job-hungry cohort of the South African society rather than from a sector of society psychologically contracted to be career soldiers.

Personality, ability and interest have to be considered when placing people in jobs to improve job satisfaction and boost organisational performance (Moerdyk et al., 2015). Ekwoaba, Ikeije and Ufoma (2015) highlighted the increasing importance of human resources as people offer essential traits and value to organisational life which, if managed well, should result in positive benefits to both the individual and the organisation. This paper thus aimed to critically analyse the human resource acquisition practices of the SAMHS and the ability to match individual profile with available posts to improve its HR acquisition practices.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The human resource acquisition practises, if done efficiently, should match potential candidates, with the requisite knowledge, skills and attitude, to available career opportunities. The Department of Defence Human Resource Strategy (DOD, 2010) identified as one of the critical success factors, the need to have an HR plan which is effective, efficient and economical to meet qualitative and quantitative HR requirements of the DOD and the need to have post profiles that enable the positioning of the most suitable person in the correct post at the right time. This can only happen if services, including the SAMHS, conduct their HR acquisition processes strictly within the framework of the relevant policies and guidelines.

The SAMHS affords young civilian members an opportunity to pursue careers in the medical field through the MSDS. Anecdotal evidence, however, points to deficits within the system as evidenced by challenges such as poor academic performance, failure to complete studies or requests by students to change the field of study. Other factors that make the system appear flawed include the intake that does not seem to be aligned to the number of available posts, and selected candidates not always being placed and staffed in line with their qualifications due to the unavailability of posts. These factors pointed to an HR system which was not efficient in ensuring a match between the skills gap and the sourcing of potential candidates. The need to have stringent recruitment and selection procedures aligned with organisational objectives cannot be overemphasised. The resultant discontent and frustration have an impact on productivity which for the DOD represents wasteful expenditure. The researcher



thus identified the need to carefully analyse the SAMHS' recruitment and selection processes.

#### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The Defence Review (RSA, 2015b) recognises the Defence Force as a key institution for leadership development and outlines interventions for ensuring a future Defence Force which is advantaged through the quality of its people. It espouses a unique and dedicated recruitment programme for officers which should be capable of attracting the best youth the country has to offer. The recruitment system, which is devolved to services, pursues a future soldier who is a skilled, healthy, fit and highly disciplined military professional, with high morale and a sense of duty (RSA, 2015b). The Review further advocates for a selection system which will inform merit-based career advancement for all soldiers. It is evident that the sourcing of future soldiers warrants an intense, rigorous and well-planned process conducted efficiently and effectively in line with the legislative mandate and to meet the strategic needs of the organisation. The White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service (RSA, 1997) highlights the need for a close alignment between the organisational structure and the strategic service delivery goals. For this to happen, the White Paper (RSA, 1997) calls for HR practitioners to adopt a professional role and to provide advice and guidance on matters inclusive of legislation and labour market trends. Kamran, Dawood and Hilal (2015) see an HR department as the core of existence of an organisation. This study hopes to assist the SAMHS to ensure that the human resource acquisition efforts taken are aligned to available employment opportunities to help recruit the right candidates. This will give the SAMHS value for money.

#### **1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this study was to analyse human resource acquisition in the South African Military Health Service.

#### **1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- To analyse the human resource acquisition process in the SAMHS.
- To establish the match between human resource acquisition and employment opportunities in the SAMHS.

- To recommend an alternative HR acquisition process.

## **1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- What are the current human resource acquisition practices used in the SAMHS?
- To what extent is there a match between human resource acquisition and employment opportunities in the SAMHS?
- Which strategies can the SAMHS use to improve the HR acquisition process?

## **1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Kraak (2004) highlighted the challenges faced by a mismatch between available work or study opportunities and outflows from schooling, and the need for the state and employment associations to work together in order to have collaborative outcomes and effects. Ideally, at the centre of this is an individual who should not just be grabbing available opportunities out of desperation but being supported in order to maximise the possibility of organisational fit, based on the candidate's knowledge, skills, attitude and potential to grow within a particular employment stream. A theoretical model was used to provide a better perspective of key elements at play. Botma, Greef, Mulaudzi and Wright (2015) posited that concepts, as building blocks of a theory, are coherently linked to enhance explanation, causality and predictions about certain phenomena. Brink, Van der Walt and Van Rensburg (2013) further explained that a model uses diagrams to indicate relationships among phenomena and thus provide an organised view of an event or situation. The researcher identified two possible theoretical models, namely the Input-Output Model and the Human Capital Integrated Interactive Model of Recruitment and Selection as appropriate for providing a basis that could be used to describe the key components of the human resource acquisition process and how they interlink.

The Input-Output Model uses inputs, transformation processing, outputs and feedback as key concepts for explaining the human resource acquisition process. However, the researcher found it limiting as the inclusion of feedback in the model broadened the range to include the period when the candidate is already employed, which was found to be beyond the boundaries of this research. Dr Woodward's model (2008), the

Human Capital Integrated (HCI) Interactive Model of Recruitment and Selection, depicted below, was found to be the most suitable model to anchor this study.



**Figure 1.1: Human Capital Integrated (HCI) Interactive Model of Recruitment and Selection**

Source: Woodward (2008).

The basis of this model was founded on the premise that recruitment and selection is a two-way process bringing the candidate and employer together, each with their own offerings and expectations. The determination of fit is critical in this interaction as it is the main determinant of success in the recruitment and selection process.

A diligent candidate is usually ambitious and would want to know the benefits of joining the organisation as well as future prospects for growth and further opportunities. This candidate would undergo the selection process already having sought some information about the organisation and what it stands for. On the employer's side, the aim is to attract the most suitable candidate, so the organisation must be marketed as an employer of choice with good prospects for growth and development. The recruitment and selection process should be a purposeful and thorough process conducted by knowledgeable and competent officials to do justice to this process. The level of competence required should be determined through job analysis and

assessed through techniques such as skills tests and structured interviewing. The candidate's personality and experience also help in assessing the effectiveness with which candidates apply their knowledge, skills and attributes. Strategies such as cognitive tests, personality assessments and emotional intelligence tests can be used for the assessment of attributes (Woodward, 2008). In the diagram (Figure 1.1), the manifestation of green from the convergence of the blue and yellow colours represents the candidate's and the employer's needs converging to create potential for success. The model fully demonstrates effective recruitment and selection as a two-way process.

## 1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Price and Murnan (2004) identified study limitations as characteristics of methodology that have had an influence on the interpretation of the research findings. Limitations constrain the generalisation of findings and/or the application to practice. The researcher identified the following limitations for this study:

- **Time constraints:** the time allocated by the institution for the completion of the study was relatively short, putting the researcher under pressure to meet the target dates. This had the potential to compromise the rigour with which the study should be conducted. The researcher can safely confirm that this did not compromise the quality of the study.
- **Access to data:** for this study, the researcher needed access to documents (personal records) from the HR section and even though permission to access records had been granted, there was reluctance on the side of the officials resulting in delays. Analysing the records was essential as this research focused on the acquisition process.
- **Self-reported data:** the researcher had her own opinion on the reasons for inefficient HR acquisition practices based on her experience of working in the Department. This could be a source of bias; however, the researcher was aware of this limitation and managed it accordingly.

## **1.10 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

According to Theofanidis and Fountouki (2018), delimitations are concerned with those definitions set by the researcher as boundaries of the study so that the researcher can achieve the aims and objectives. The researcher needs to provide reasons for not following a course of action and the available alternatives. Delimitations were thus seen to be under the researcher's control. All four services of the SANDF undertake the HR acquisition process and are bound by the same HR policies; however, to avoid making the study too broad and to enable completion of the study within the set time frames, the researcher focused on the SAMHS only.

## **1.11 CHAPTER ORGANISATION**

A numerical sequence was used to organise content for this study to ensure a logical flow. The chapters were structured as reflected below:

Chapter 1 – The chapter has provided an introduction and background information on the study. The problem statement, significance of the study, aim, research objectives, research questions and the theoretical framework were covered in this chapter which ended with the limitations and delimitations of this study.

Chapter 2 – For the Literature Review chapter the researcher conducted an extensive review of current and past literature related to human resources acquisition process. The chapter starts by outlining the mandate of the SANDF and explaining the environment in which the study was conducted. The definition of human resource management and functions are provided. The youth unemployment situation which is very critical for this study is explored and its association to the topic is demonstrated. Various pieces of legislation applicable to this study are identified and their relevance to this study highlighted. The chapter concludes with a detailed discussion of HR acquisition practices in the SAMHS, the strategies used and the alignment of policy and practice to the realities of the labour market.

Chapter 3 – The Research Methodology chapter starts by outlining the philosophical foundation followed by indicating the choice of research approach and the rationale thereof. The researcher indicates the research design and sampling strategy used.

The chapter also covers the sample size, how data was collected and analysed, as well as how validity and reliability were ensured, and finally ethical considerations are highlighted.

Chapter 4 – The chapter deals with the data presentation, discussion and interpretation of results. The chapter explains how the data gathered during the research process was carefully analysed in line with the posed research questions, using both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis. The researcher uses graphic presentation through charts, graphs and tables as well as the narrative form in this chapter. This helped strengthen the accuracy of results compared to when the researcher could have used a single method of approach.

Chapter 5 – This final chapter on the conclusion and recommendations highlights the major findings, provides recommendations, and makes suggestions for further studies.

## CHAPTER 2: THE LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

A review of literature enables the researcher to locate similar or related studies which may form the foundation for the current study and may also help the researcher to adopt a relevant methodology for the study (Brink et al., 2013). This research will contribute to the knowledge base to give perspective to current practices in the human resources acquisition field. The HR department is regarded as the life blood of organisations, spanning an employee's association with an organisation from the pre-employment period through various developmental stages until an employee leaves the organisation. Human resource acquisition provides a gateway through which new employees join an organisation and is thus one of the critical functions. At a strategic level, strategic human resource management (strategic HRM) is described by Armstrong and Taylor (2014) as being involved with the development and implementation of HR strategies that are integrated with organisational strategies and support their achievement. Strategic HRM can thus be an interface between HRM and strategic HRM. Human resource acquisition practices thus must be informed by the direction of an organisation, but equally important is the need for processes and procedures to be executed within the framework of legislative prescripts. Regarding the renewal of the Defence Force personnel component, the Defence Review (RSA, 2015b) urges for interventions which will ensure that the future Defence Force is advantaged through the quality of its people.

The literature that was reviewed for this study covers concepts and content related to human resource acquisition practices. The chapter, based on the literature that the researcher reviewed, describes the mandate of the SANDF, provides the theoretical framework, discusses the different human resource acquisition strategies, explores the youth unemployment situation, identifies and discusses the different policies relating to human resource acquisition and analyses the standard acquisition practices followed by the SAMHS in its endeavour to execute its mandate through effective force preparation and force employment.

## 2.2 THE MANDATE OF THE SANDF

In an ever-changing geopolitical environment, the government needs to ensure that its Defence Force is not only there for the country, but that it is the Defence Force that the citizens want and can be proud of (RSA, 2015b). Section 200 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996a) mandates the Defence Force *to defend and protect the Republic, its territorial integrity and its people...* The Defence Review (RSA, 2015b) states the need for South Africa's military capability to be proportional to its international status, strategic posture and continental leadership role. At a strategic level it is essential that the role and functions of the Defence Force be aligned to its Constitutional mandate. The well-being and prosperity of the people, growth of the economy, and demonstrable good governance form part of the DOD's domestic priorities (RSA, 2015b). The Review further acknowledges the arduous tasks that the country as a developmental state is facing, which include poverty, unemployment, inequality and criminality. An overview of the goals and tasks as identified in the Defence Review (RSA, 2015b) seems to be aligned to the measures aimed at addressing the identified challenges as reflected in its Goal four (4) which focuses on developmental responsibilities, with one of the tasks being to contribute to the development of South Africa and its people. The link from the strategic intent to the operational level thus must guide the unfolding of HR processes, including human resource acquisition processes. This is based on the assertion by Armstrong and Taylor (2014) who highlighted the aim of strategic HRM as being its fundamental aim is to generate organisational capability. This is achieved by making sure that the organisation has the type of employees it needs to sustain competitive advantage; employees who are skilled, engaged, committed, and motivated. Success depends on laying a solid foundation through the human resource acquisition process which in turn gives credence to the quality of its armed forces.

Literature reflects the magnitude assigned to the role of the military in determining how powerful a country is regarded. The most powerful countries in the world shape global economic patterns and the strength of the military is one of the attributes used to determine a country's ranking. According to the Global Firepower (GFP) Report (GFP, 2019) which reflects the 2019 military strength rankings, the top five out of 137 countries included in the database are the United States, Russia, China, India and



France respectively. The top five for Africa are Egypt, rated 12<sup>th</sup>, Algeria 27<sup>th</sup>, South Africa 32<sup>nd</sup>, Nigeria 44<sup>th</sup> and Ethiopia 47<sup>th</sup>. When reflecting on what makes the American military the best, Carter (2017) opined that besides its unrivalled technology and compelling mission, America has the finest fighting force because of the type of people they attract to their all-volunteer force. This reflects the fundamental importance assigned to the human resources acquisition process for the military.

Carter (2017) stressed that the DOD needed to keep pace with dramatic technological changes, the labour market and human resource management to ensure that the US military remained a place where America's finest wanted to continue serving. Carter (2017) further acknowledged how the department identified the need to make fundamental changes in their processes of attracting, developing and advancing individual talent, thus making dramatic changes from recruitment to retirement, driven by the knowledge that they were competing against some of the best employers in America.

Even though there are vast differences between the Defence Forces of the super-powers and those of developing countries, the utmost solemnity with which they attend to their human acquisition processes provides critical lessons for South Africa. A similar intensity can be demonstrated from the Australian Defence Force (ADF) White Paper (2000) which acknowledges the need to compete against other employers for the best and brightest. Faced with a gradually shrinking recruitment base of young Australians, the ADF intensified its competition for skilled employees with good qualities (Thomas and Bell, 2007). An assessment of its human resource management strategies and practices was undertaken specifically for qualities such as workplace attitudes and the relationship between standards of selection and training in relation to the concepts of organisational fit and commitment as well as the psychological contract. The main aim was to ensure the alignment of HR policies and practice with the realities of their labour market to ensure achievement and sustainment of a competitive advantage and thus a preferable position in the marketplace. South Africa must compare herself with the best, not with the aim of catching up, but to create growth points which can be used as tools for the betterment of its environment. The Defence Review (RSA, 2015b) recognises the Defence Force as a key institution for leadership development within the South African society and highlights the need to

establish a unique and dedicated recruitment programme for officers which will attract the best young men and women South Africa has to offer. A critical link is made between future operational success and the calibre of a future soldier, reflected as responsible, value-laden and disciplined (RSA, 2015b). The HR acquisition section needs to have efficient systems for acquisition and attrition processes to ensure affordable force requirements and appropriate ratios. The SANDF recruitment system is done on a decentralised basis with each of the four services, namely the South African Army (SAA), South African Air Force (SAAF), South African Navy (SAN) and the South African Military Health Service (SAMHS) conducting their own processes for human resource acquisition. The focus of this study was on the analysis of the recruitment process of the SAMHS – which is presented in this thesis.

### **2.3 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

Human resource management must be executed within the ambit of the broader strategic human resource management and the execution should lead towards the achievement of specified future goals. The HR strategy should thus provide a sense of direction. Three fundamental characteristics of strategy are identified by Armstrong and Taylor (2014):

- A strategy is forward-looking, providing direction about where to go and how to get there. It is thus a statement of intent, defining long-term goals and how they will be attained. Strategy is concerned about ends and means.
- Strategy recognises that organisational capability depends on resource capability. The potential to deliver results relies on the quantity and quality of the available resources.
- The aim is to achieve strategic fit. There must be congruence between functional strategies, HR management being one example, and the broader organisational strategy, taking into consideration the context of the internal and external environment.

Armstrong and Taylor (2014) described strategic HRM as conceptual, providing a notion of achieving the 'fit' between organisational strategies and HR, thus providing guidance for HR processes on where to go and how to get there. It also informs HR

functionaries about the HR approach to adopt in order to make sure that HR efforts support organisational strategies and add value.

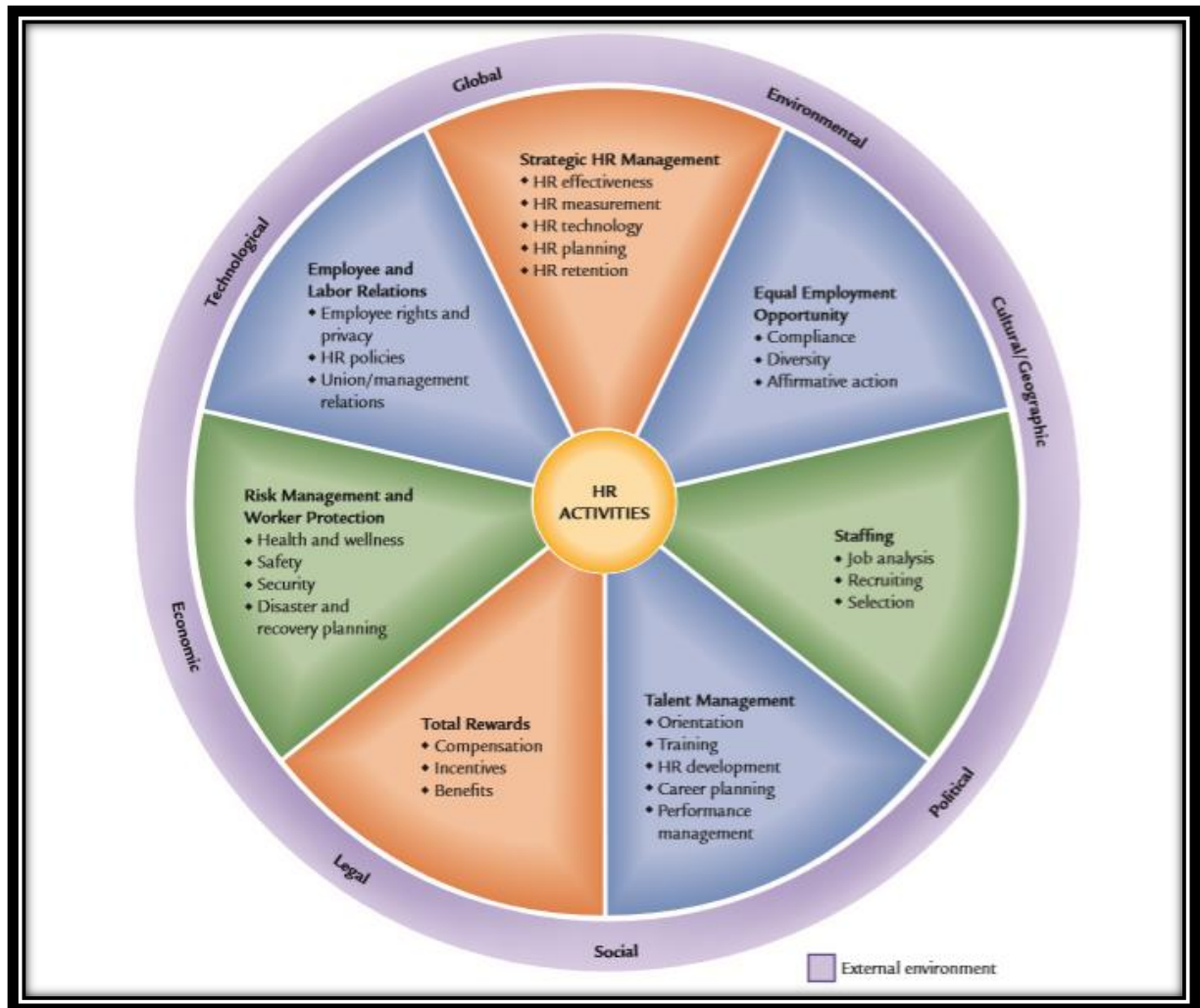
In support of the above, Armstrong and Taylor (2014) identified the following objectives of strategic HRM:

- The need to achieve integration by ensuring that vertically, HR strategies are aligned with organisational strategies and that there is horizontal integration of various HR strategies, HR acquisition being one example.
- Provision of a sense of direction to ensure that organisational and employee needs can be met through practical and coherent HR policies and programmes.
- Contribution towards the formulation of the organisation's strategy by presenting ways to assist the organisation to capitalise on the strengths of its human resources.

According to Bratton and Gold (2017), HRM is a multi-disciplinary field concerned with managing people and managing work and it involves decisions and actions that influence the relationship between the organisation and employees, its human resources. Haslinda (2009) defined HRM as a series of organised activities designed to produce behavioural change. The activities are conducted within a specified time and include recruitment and selection, compensation and benefits, labour and industrial relations as well as safety and health management. Armstrong and Taylor (2014) simply stated that it is concerned with all aspects of how people are employed and managed in organisations. From all definitions it is clear that the primary focus of HRM is on people and that it is a diverse field, involving various activities. This study is about human resources acquisition, with specific focus on recruitment and selection, which form part of initial HRM processes organisations undertake. The importance of human capital, described by Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall (2003) as each individual's unique knowledge, skills, abilities and experience, can never be over-estimated as demonstrated by Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall (2003) when stating that organisations are increasingly realising that in people, their human resource, they have inimitable and flexible capabilities with a crucial role of assisting an organisation achieve a competitive advantage. This sentiment is shared by Chungyalpa and Karishma (2016) who identified human resource as an organisation's biggest asset

with the human resource acquisition processes being mechanisms for ensuring the employment of individuals presumed to be best suited to fit specific organisational tasks.

Mathis and Jackson (2008) suggested that organisations need to earn their reputation and to think on a different level about HR management. They further acknowledged the need to focus on primary HR activities; however, opined the insufficiency of traditional activities and stressed the need to think of, and to treat people as part of the organisation's capital assets. According to Mathis and Jackson (2008), four types of assets must be managed in organisations, namely physical, financial, intangible and human. Human capital, they argued, is not just people in an organisation, but what they contribute to organisational success, inclusive of intellectual capital which reflects the knowledge, thinking, creativity and decision making that people contribute and all illustrating the potential value of human capital. To get the best out of human capital, Mathis and Jackson (2008) suggested that HR activities be based on research, best practices and continuing improvement of HR efforts. Seven interlinked activities are identified as key HR management activities in organisations, and these activities are influenced by external forces identified as political, economic, social, technological, environmental, legal, cultural/geographic and global.



**Figure 2.1: Key human resources activities**

Source: Mathis and Jackson (2008).

The following are the key HR management activities as reflected in Figure 2.1:

- **Equal Employment Opportunity:** Most organisations have a diversified workforce and legislative compliance is important.
- **Staffing:** The purpose of staffing is to ensure the provision of an adequate supply of individuals qualified for specific jobs. The starting point is job analysis, which lays a foundation for determining jobs to fill. This information is then used for recruiting interested candidates who will then undergo the selection process to identify the most suitable candidates.
- **Talent Management and Development:** This starts with orientation after the appointment of new employees and encompasses different forms of training. HR

development prepares employees for future challenges and the movement and progress within the organisation is determined through career planning. Performance management makes it possible for an employee's performance to be assessed.

- **Total Rewards:** HR activities include compensation and benefits and rewards for performance.
- **Risk Management and Worker Protection:** Workplace health and safety, as well as security are all critical in the workplace. Employers need to ensure worker protection. Disaster planning and recovery planning are also issues that employers need to attend to.
- **Employee and Labour Relations:** The rights and privacy issues of employees must be well managed within the ambit of the law. HR policies and procedures must be reviewed regularly and updated. A cordial union/employer relationship will ensure a positive work climate for both the employee and employer.

With the success of an organisation heavily reliant on its human capital it is only appropriate that those responsible for HR acquisition be efficient in this role; however, Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall (2003) pointed out that most organisations unfortunately fail to see HR management staff members as equally crucial in capitalising on the competitive resource and at the same time, pointed to the other side of the coin, highlighting the need for HR management to reinvent itself in the face of modern day challenges of knowledge economy so that they become relevant as a crucial source of competitive advantage and not a constraining factor undermining an organisation's competitive edge (Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall, 2003).

## **2.4 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

Chungyalpa and Karishma (2016) identified human resource as a biggest asset in an organisation with recruitment and selection processes being mechanisms for ensuring the employment of the right people with the right skills to fit specific organisational tasks. This sentiment is shared by Ekwoaba et al. (2015) who recognise the recruitment and selection process as attracting and identifying potential candidates through evaluation to aid the process of choosing the right calibre candidates. Kamran et al. (2015) described recruitment and selection as a linking process where those with

jobs to fill, recruit and select those seeking jobs. Ekwoaba et al. (2015) defined recruitment as the process starting with the identification and attracting of potential candidates to the organisation, and to start evaluating them for future employment. Recruitment is closely linked to the selection process, which begins after the identification of the right calibre of candidates. This definition is similar to that of Ekwoaba et al. (2015) who stated that the recruitment and selection process enables organisations to get the number and quality of candidates needed to meet the strategic organisational objectives at minimal cost. The recruitment and selection process is described by Chungyalpa and Karishma (2016) as an arduous process of attracting and identifying prospective candidates, which can only happen after the demand for new workers has been ascertained through manpower planning. It can thus be deduced that recruitment involves those processes undertaken by an organisation to attract and identify individuals who will contribute positively towards the success of an organisation.

Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall (2003) expanded the scope to include recruiting, selecting, hiring and training employees under the securing of human capital by an organisation and only after these processes can employees be assigned to various jobs. The focus of this research was only on the first two processes, recruitment and selection as the remaining aspects are considered to fall within the period of employment. Besides the expansion, Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall (2003) further explained the depth, indicating that tasks in the work environment are more complex and dynamic necessitating continuous learning, therefore, recruiting and selecting activities need to be focused on organisation fit, value fit, and attitudes, rather than focusing only on individuals with specific skills and experiences. Moerdyk et al. (2015) supported this viewpoint, citing that organisations that want to compete and thrive globally need to change the way they behave and to constantly improve quality, service delivery and turnaround time through the improvement of internal processes and ethical behaviour, enhancing people-skills by attracting, developing and retaining good people and empowering them to achieve organisational objectives.

According to Argue (2015), recruitment and selection is the core of how an organisation perceives the human resources needed to sustain a competitive advantage. The recruitment process enables an organisation to source future



employees which will then be followed by the selection process. According to Armstrong and Taylor (2014), this process starts with the defining of job requirements, after which the processes of attracting candidates and sifting through applications will follow. Identified candidates will then go through interviews, testing, assessments, background checking and offering employment. A well-planned, effective recruitment programme is likely to appeal to a greater number of applicants, broadening the selection pool for the recruiter.

Moerdyk et al. (2005) highlighted challenges that organisations in South Africa are facing such as the relatively low-skill base that affects the ability to deliver competitive products and services. Additionally, there are at times challenges where the values of employees and the communities from which they come are not aligned with those of employers, leading to value clashes and disagreement about what needs to be achieved and how best to achieve it (Moerdyk et al., 2005). Considering today's competitive world, it is only appropriate that organisations entrust these crucial functions in the hands of those with proficiency to carry them out, as endorsed by Kamran et al. (2015) who stated that the human resource practitioners, as decision makers, must be competent to manage the human resource processes efficiently. This is supported by Argue (2015) who stated that an organisation can incur serious costs if bad decisions are made in the selection process and advised on the adaptation of best HRM practices and a human resource department which is future orientated.

#### **2.4.1 Recruitment**

Inefficient recruitment strategies have been highlighted as a reason for the difficulties companies face when hiring (World Economic Forum (WEF), 2014). Adopting better hiring practices and job design will minimise the skills mismatch. The report further highlights that improving the labour market information will not only reduce skills mismatch but will also guide career choices and support occupational mobility (WEF, 2014).

The human resource acquisition process is not just a haphazard process but, as described by Armstrong and Taylor (2014), it drives an understanding of the direction an organisation wants to go as well as the determination of how many people will be needed to meet organisational needs, the required skills and behaviour to support



business strategies and the organisation's plans for changing its culture which will inform the qualities needed from potential employees. The process of finding people the organisation wants is described by Armstrong and Taylor (2014) as starting steps in the recruitment and selection process and involves defining requirements and attracting candidates.

On their recruitment strategy, the Northern Devon Health Care Trust (2018) believes in enhancing a professional reputation and their recruitment strategies. The measures that they believe should be taken to enhance their professional reputation reflect that they are resolute about the need for change and their commitment as well, and they include the following:

- Being proactive by developing an annual planner.
- Evaluating their recruitment campaigns in order to improve service standards.
- Reviewing and improving their advert template and recruitment brand.
- Wider and appropriate marketing of roles.
- Showcase the organisation as an employer of choice.
- Improvement of the quality of recruitment materials and their literature on career opportunities.
- Have personnel acting professionally in all activities which will help build the organisation's reputation as a good employer.
- Ensure that the recruitment practices are conducted within the confines of the law and ensuring effective HR support.
- Marketing of organisational achievements.

According to Armstrong and Taylor (2014), recruitment plans are derived from formal personnel plans which stipulate the required number and categories of candidates needed. It is essential to define requirements as they indicate organisational expectations. Defining requirements are discussed under role profiles and person specifications, both used to indicate requirements to potential applicants when the organisation posts vacancies as well as for the assessment of candidates during selection testing and interviews.

Role profiles inform potential applicants about the purpose of the role, the associated reporting relationships and expected key results. If there are special requirements for the post those will also be indicated under role profiles. This explanation is supported by Argue (2015) who referred to this as job analysis and stated the importance of knowing how the job fits into the structure of the organisation, which helps with knowing suitable candidates to attract and thus if done well can save the organisation a lot of time and money. The role profile forms the basis for the next step, person specification.

Person specification as explained by Armstrong and Taylor (2014) indicates the knowledge, skills, and abilities that the applicant should have to perform in the role, the behavioural competencies as well as the necessary qualifications and experience. Armstrong and Taylor (2014) provided broad guidelines under which specifications may be drawn:

- The knowledge an individual needs to have to carry out the role.
- Skills and abilities to produce the role-specific behaviour required for successful performance of the role. To maximise the chances that the candidate will fit and support the organisational culture the role specific behaviour should be aligned to the organisation's core values and competency framework.
- Qualifications and training required, including academic or technical.
- Experience, which covers achievements and activities that would be likely to predict success.
- Specific demands such as any additional requirement that the candidate will be expected to have in a specific area.

Armstrong and Taylor (2014) suggested three steps for attracting candidates:

- An analysis of recruitment strengths and weaknesses – this will help with the development of employee value proposition, which is about what an organisation can offer which is of value and can help prospective employees to join the organisation, and employer brand, which is the portrayal of the organisation as a good employer. Attracting candidates involves identifying, evaluating and using the most appropriate sources of applicants. Candidates are selling themselves

but are also buying what the organisation has to offer. If, in the latter sense, the labour market is a buyer's market, then the company selling itself to candidates must study their wants and needs in relation to what it can provide.

- An analysis of the requirement to establish the type of person needed – this includes the required education, qualifications and/or experience. Consideration of aspects about the job or the organisation that can help attract good candidates, and to have such factors included when advertising or reaching potential applicants through other means as well as what might put them off, so that objections can be anticipated.
- Identifying potential sources of candidates – organisations use various strategies to attract applicants such as:
  - Online recruiting
  - Social media
  - Newspaper advertising
  - Recruitment agencies
  - Job centres or search consultants
  - Employee referral schemes
  - Links with educational establishments
  - Personal contacts.

Collins and Han (2004) suggested that early recruitment practices, corporate advertising, and firm reputation each have a direct effect on the applicant pool quantity and quality.

According to Kumari (2012), a recruitment effort done well will not only attract several qualified applicants but will also cause the unqualified applicants to self-select themselves out of job candidacy. This dual purpose will minimise the cost of processing unqualified candidates.

Kumari (2012) highlighted the benefits and importance of recruitment, that it:

- Creates a talent pool of potential candidates.
- Increases the pool of job seeking candidates at minimum cost.
- Helps to increase the success rate of the selection process.

- Helps in identifying and preparing potential applicants who will be the appropriate candidature for the job.

The WEF (2014), however, brings a different perspective that the focus should no longer be on filling a job vacancy but rather on a career-transition approach, which takes into consideration the long-term consequences of placement decisions on an individual's employability and the ability to adapt. This approach reinforces the importance of skills and skills profiling in their matching activities. It is essential to invest in incorporating individual action plans or employability development plans based on skills assessment tools that portray job seekers' complete skill sets, including non-formal learning. It is also crucial to invest further in working closely with employers to ensure that skill profiles are matched to open vacancies.

**Table 2.1: Advantages and disadvantages of common recruitment methods**

| <b>RECRUITMENT METHOD</b> | <b>ADVANTAGES</b>   | <b>DISADVANTAGES</b>   |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Online advertising</b> | <p>Vacancies are managed effectively through technology.</p> <p>Broad reach.</p> <p>Branding with 'soft' information on workplace culture may be done.</p> <p>High-volumes of applications can be managed in a consistent manner.</p> <p>Quicker and cheaper than traditional methods of advertising.</p> <p>Allows for electronic submission.</p> <p>Easier to change job details.</p> | <p>Possibility of receiving large numbers of inappropriate applications, especially in cases where the job description or person specification was not stated.</p> <p>Potential to turn off interested individuals if the website is badly designed. May cause brand damage.</p> <p>May be regarded as discriminatory where candidates are not computer literate</p> <p>May attract irrelevant applications and may not be the applicant's first choice.</p> |
| <b>Press advertising</b>  | <p>Recruitment messages and brand clearly communicated.</p> <p>Reinforces corporate message and creates awareness around brand.</p> <p>Sends a positive message about the company to the marketplace.</p> <p>Publications may target candidates with specific skills or experience.</p>   | <p>Upfront costs are high and there is no guarantee of success or return on investment.</p> <p>High administrative costs incurred with the sifting of applications, resource-heavy.</p> <p>Progress is often a slow.</p>   |

| RECRUITMENT METHOD           | ADVANTAGES  | DISADVANTAGES  |
|------------------------------|---|--|
|                              | <p>People who were not considering moving may be encouraged to apply.</p> <p>Advertising costs are fixed, although there may be need to repeat adverts.</p>   | <p>No control over where the ads are placed within the press area.</p> <p>Might be missed by those who read specific newspapers or journal only.</p> <p>Limited reporting on success, as there is no automated response mechanism in printed editions.</p> <p>Becomes irrelevant quickly.</p>  |
| <b>Recruitment Campaigns</b> | <p>Good way to meet a lot of people in a short space of time.</p> <p>Offers direct interaction with potential candidates.</p> <p>Cost-effective if there are many roles to fill.</p> <p>Provides opportunity to demonstrate employer brand.</p> <p>Increases organisational awareness.</p> <p>Major source of future talent.</p>  | <p>Difficult to sift candidates.</p> <p>Competition against many other would-be employers.</p> <p>Might be difficult to stand out, especially with limited financial resources.</p> <p>May not be cost effective if there are few vacancies.</p> <p>Recruitment campaigns can be costly.</p>   |
| <b>Recruitment Agencies</b>  | <p>Expert knowledge of the target.</p> <p>Speedy response as they usually have dedicated staff.</p> <p>Better quality due to pre-screening and pre-referencing of candidates.</p> <p>Candidates find it easier to deal with an agency rather than directly with a potential employer.</p> <p>Convenient due to minimal administration as most of the recruitment tasks are done by the agency, including advertising.</p> <p>Process quicker as they already have a database of potential candidates.</p> <p>The agency staff are often familiar with the culture and ethos of an organisation and will source accordingly.</p> <p>Cost saving as no fee is payable if an applicant is not hired.</p> <p>It is a convenient and time saving method of recruiting.</p> | <p>The usage of only one agency may be limiting.</p> <p>Less reputable agencies may send too many candidates, including some who not completely meet the employer's requirements.</p> <p>Some candidates may prefer to deal with the potential employer directly.</p> <p>It may be costly, with some agencies charging up to 20% of the appointee's salary.</p> <p>A limited pool of applicants may yield unsuitable candidates.</p> |

Source: Armstrong and Taylor (2014) and Randstad Solutions Ltd (2019).

### 2.4.2 Selection

Selection comes after the recruitment process and is concerned with deciding which candidates or applicants should be appointed. Selection is defined by Kumari (2012) as the process of picking individuals with appropriate qualifications to fill jobs in an organisation. A similar view is shared by Armstrong and Taylor (2014) who regard selection as the process of assessing suitable potential candidates by predicting the extent to which they will be able to carry out a role successfully. The process is seen as being more than just choosing the best candidate but also as an attempt to strike a balance between what candidates can and want to do and what the organisation requires.

Kumari (2012) highlighted three reasons for the importance of selection:

- Performance – employees with the right skills are likely to perform better in an organisation whilst those without requisite skills might not perform effectively which might result in poor performance for the organisation. So selection provides an opportunity to screen out the undesirables and to choose candidates who are regarded as likely to contribute to organisational success.
- Cost – it is costly to recruit and hire employees so it is essential to consider the cost-benefit ratio during the selection process so as to avoid unnecessary wastage of money.
- Legal obligations – acquisition practices should be done in a non-discriminatory way. It is essential to avoid negligent hiring by making a systematic effort to get all the necessary information about the applicant as well as the verification of the documentation. Failure to satisfy legal obligations when hiring might lead to the hiring of individuals with criminal records.

According to Armstrong and Taylor (2014), organisations may contract external bodies to initiate the selection process or may opt to carry out the whole process fully. Managing applications starts with scrutinising all applications to assess the information supplied by the applicants, sorting, and shortlisting applicants for selection interviews.

### **2.4.2.1 Processing applications**

According to Armstrong and Taylor (2014), applicants usually send application letters, commonly supported with curriculum vitae and these are commonly accompanied by the organisation's application form. These basic documents provide essential information about the candidate which forms the foundation for drawing up shortlists which outline candidates who qualify for selection interviews. This process promotes fairness as decisions are based on the same standard against the person specification. Selection, according to Armstrong and Taylor (2014), involves making a choice between candidates and is guided by the extent to which the behaviour, traits and qualifications of applicants match the person specification of the organisation. The organisation may receive a large number of applications and Armstrong and Taylor (2014) advise that the first step should be the listing of applications indicating names, the date on which the application was received and assigning action to be taken, whether it is an outright rejection, on hold or to be interviewed. A standard letter of acknowledgement should be sent to all applicants except in situations where a decision can be made instantly that an applicant is rejected or qualifies for an interview. The next steps are to draw up a shortlist and to arrange for interviews.

### **2.4.2.2 Selecting candidates**

Typical selection methods are indicated by Armstrong and Taylor (2014) below:

- **Sifting applications**

Armstrong and Taylor (2014) explained that sorting is done by comparing the applicant's information with criteria as indicated in the person specification. Consistency is essential when sorting and application decisions may be classified according to whether they are regarded as essential, very desirable, or desirable. In situations where a lot of applicants qualify for shortlisting, the process of sifting should be repeated against more stringent criteria until a required number for selection interviews is identified.

- **Interviewing**

Interviewing is a commonly used face-to-face interactive method of selection. Through interviewing, a candidate is prompted to provide information that will assist the selection panel make a prediction about how likely is the fit in the organisation and the performance in the job applied for (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014). Interviews should be structured to promote fairness and consistency. The interview panel should bear in mind that the performance of a potential candidate might be masked in candidates who are overly anxious.

- **Psychological testing**

Psychological tests which are generally called psychometric tests are measuring instruments used to assess intelligence or personality. The use of psychometric tests, which use systematic and standardised procedures for the measurement of differences in individual characteristics make it possible for the selectors to understand the candidates better.

- Intelligence and personality tests are commonly used as part of a selection procedure where a large number of recruits are required, and where it is difficult to rely completely on examination results. They may be used where intelligence is a key factor and in the absence of other reliable methods of measuring it.
- Aptitude tests are commonly used where specific and measurable skills are required, such as skilled repair work.
- Personality tests may be used to complement structured interviews and intelligence and aptitude tests. They are used more in jobs such as where 'personality' is believed to be important. Kaygin and Gulluce (2013) added the importance of individual values as they affect all life, attitudes and personality. Values may be regarded as the source for criteria used to evaluate and judge people's thoughts and actions. Kaygin and Gulluce (2013) further stated that individual values are the basis of an individual's point of view and form an integral part of each individual's behaviour and decision-making process.



Various types of tests such as intelligence, personality and aptitude tests may be used in some situations; however, they should never be done just for the sake of it, but to contribute to the success of the predictions for which they are being used.

- **Assessment centres**

Some organisations may use assessment centres where candidates will be tested using various assessment techniques which may take a day or two, after which a comprehensive report of the suitability of candidates will be provided. An assessment centre may do exercises, individually or in a group to simulate the key dimensions of the job, with the assumption that the simulations will predict job behaviour. Interviews are conducted and performance measured according to the required competencies. Group assessments cater for the interaction and make the experience more open. Trained assessors are used to ensure the objectivity of assessments. More information about the candidates is usually obtained than with conventional interviews. Assessment centres are generally used for managerial positions and their disadvantages are that they are expensive and time-consuming.

- **Medical assessment**

According to Freeman (2017), various employers and career fields make use of medical examinations as part of the selection process to ensure that applicants are able to perform in their respective jobs in a safe manner. They may also help decide whether the potential employee can deal with stressful situations rationally or make sound decisions on the spur of the moment. The type of work usually determines the extent of the medical assessment necessary, but generally the assessment consists of physical assessment, psychological testing and drug testing. Medical assessments are always confidential.

- **Reference checks**

Bhoganadam and Dasaraju (2014) suggested that employee background check is considered to be one of the vital steps of the recruitment and selection process as it reduces negligent hiring. On the other hand, Suder (2014) believes that background checks are unacceptable as they may lead to premature conclusions about applicants' personality and skills. According to Waddell (2018), hiring quality and competent employees is a challenge for organisations. When hiring an employee, the knowledge,

skills, and abilities must match the job requirements. Hiring appropriate, trustworthy employees may decrease training costs. Candidates are also known at times to exaggerate their qualifications during applications and interviews in order to meet the job requirements or enhance their chances of employment, more so in a country with such high educational divide, and unequal competition for scarce positions.

Halcrow (2008) indicated that pre-employment background screening:

- discourages potential applicants who have something to hide such as a criminal record or false Curriculum Vitae (CV).
- limits an element of uncertainty in the hiring process.
- provides legal protection in the event of a lawsuit as it would demonstrate that an employer had exercised due diligence.
- encourages openness as applicants tend to be forthcoming in their interviews.

In as much as an employee background check is a crucial component of the recruitment and selection process, organisations must do it ethically with the candidate's knowledge and consent for checking. Employers should not violate laws while undertaking background checks. Some organisations do not do background checks as a rule but consider relevancy in line with certain positions. According to Molosankwe (2019), the issuing of a letter dated January 2019 by the Director General, Department of Public Service and Administration as a Directive from the Minister, marks a significant reform in personnel suitability checks for the appointment of new entrants and employees applying for new posts or transfers. The initiative covers criminal records, verification of citizenship, financial records, verification of qualifications and of previous employment. The social media behaviour of an applicant could also be put under the spotlight. America's Equal Employment Opportunity Commission stresses the need to comply with federal laws when conducting such inquiries to protect applicants from discrimination based on aspects such as race, nationality, sex, religion or disability.

### **2.4.3 Offering employment**

Offering employment is the final stage in the selection procedure. The offer of employment has to be confirmed after the candidate has met all the requirements of

the post. Finally, the contract of employment has to be prepared for successful candidates.

#### **2.4.4 Emerging trends**

Chungyalpa and Karishma (2016) highlighted tremendous changes taking place in the recruitment and selection processes. These processes are driven by technological innovations and the need for organisations to embrace these innovations as emerging trends. Advancements include the creation of mobile career sites to accommodate the increasing number of mobile devices used for job searching by prospective candidates. Social networking sites have gained prominence amongst internet users and a steadily increasing trend amongst organisations is the adoption and utilisation of these technical solutions to solicit and recruit suitably qualified talents. Chungyalpa and Karishma (2016) acknowledged the human resource as the biggest asset of an organisation. They stressed that the capabilities of any organisation rely heavily on its employees. Recruitment and selections processes should thus never be compromised.

### **2.5 YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The reality of massive unemployment amongst the South African youth precludes them from living which reflects, actualises and confirms their human dignity. Unemployment thus has a direct bearing on the human resources acquisition patterns. Due to unemployment, the youth will do anything to grab any job opportunity coming their way. Massive unemployment is definitely not unique to the South African situation but is a global phenomenon – as outlined by Ventura (2018) – namely that global unemployment peaked in 2009 and gradually started declining and stabilised in 2014. Statistics on unemployment differ and defining the unemployment rate also differs according to methods which were used for collecting data in different countries; however, the general performance of South Africa is very poor, being placed the highest out of 41 countries by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and in 2018 being ranked second lowest by the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2018). Lediga (2018) reported in The Daily Maverick that the South African unemployment rate remained stubbornly at 26.7% and suggested that lessons be learnt from developed countries, using Ireland as an example where

the unemployment rate was reduced from 18% to 6%. According to a Statistics South Africa report (Stats SA, 2018), the unemployment rate among the South African youth, described to be between the ages 15–34 years, stands at 38.2%, which represents a staggering one in every three young people in the labour force. The concern expressed by the ILO Director-General is that the “global economy is still failing to create enough jobs”. A critical reality as reflected by Ventura (2018) is that the stability, extent of development as well as the growth trajectory of an economy are directly influenced by the unemployment rates.

For our domestic situation, the 1994 democratic dispensation raised high expectations for a better life mainly among the previously disadvantaged population, with the government promising better living conditions, alleviation of poverty and the reduction of the income inequality gap, which according to Meiring, Kannemeyer and Potgieter (2018) is regarded as the biggest source of division among the South Africans. On a broader level, the HCI Interactive Model of Recruitment and Selection remains relevant, with the government representing the employer, and the unemployed masses reflected through the opportunities sought from government. According to Ventura (2018), the rising levels of unemployment result in loss of individual income and for governments, reduced tax collection with a resultant increase in spending on social grants. The long-term effects of unemployment are massive too. They impact on social cohesion and prompt negative sentiments about the effectiveness of democratic models. This South African unemployment situation is referred to by the Nobel laureate Romer (2019) as an *economic disappointment*, and should the situation continue unabated, he warns that it will lead to a catastrophe for the future of the country.

### **2.5.1 National Skills Development System**

Dagume and Gyekye (2016) opined the need for government to strengthen the laws and policies which guide institutions and organisations to offer internship programmes for at least 24 months instead of 12 months or less, with the internship being career specific. This emanates from their study which shows that the chances for unemployment among people with some job-specific training are less compared to those without any training with the main contributors for youth unemployment being the lack of training or skills as well as the lack of work experience.

The Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa (HRDS-SA) (RSA, 2009) aims to enhance the skills, knowledge and abilities of all individuals to assist them in reaching their full potential and thus to improve productivity in order to support social and economic development. Included in the commitments of the HRDS-SA (RSA, 2009) is the need to implement skills development programmes and to make sure that the youth can access opportunities to education and training to improve the likelihood of success in vocational training as well as sustainable employment. Central to this is the need to fast-track development in order to ensure a match between human resources supply and demand. The HRDS-SA (RSA, 2009) mobilises participation with various stakeholders, including government, which are critical to attaining economic growth and development.

The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) (RSA, 2015a), as a sub-component of the HRDS-SA (RSA, 2009), provides a strategic guide for skills development in acknowledgement of the severe skills shortage which continues to hamper economic growth. The NSDS highlights the need to improve access to post-school learning and to have links established to the world of employment in helping to address the need for social development and economic growth. The SANDF thus has a firm foundation in its socio-economic upliftment programme through the MSDS.

### **2.5.2 The Military Skills Development System**

In view of the focus of this study, it is essential to decide of the current human resource acquisition practices within the SAMHS. This includes checking whether the SAMHS is sourcing the best candidates to join its ranks, identifying possible gaps with the current recruitment and selection process, and determining measures being taken to improve the current process. A two-year voluntary service system, the MSDS, is used by the SANDF to offer young South African citizens an opportunity to serve in uniform with the long-term goal of enhancing the deployment capability of the Defence Force. The Department of Defence and Military Veterans (DODMV) started implementing the MSDS in 2003 as part of the strategy for human resource renewal to ensure adequate provision of young, fit and trained members for force employment, especially for peace missions. The goals of the MSDS include the induction into the SANDF basic military training and acquisition of functional skills; the evaluation of their development potential and assessment of suitability for continued service in the Regular Force and

Reserves; the testing of members in order for the organisation to choose individuals with potential for a possible career in the military; to build capability by ensuring an adequate, trained pool of young and fit members who will fulfil SANDF deployment needs and sustain the Reserve Force with trained troops and junior leaders. This national skilling programme is also meant to offer the youth a greater chance of employability outside the DOD by the end of the contract. The department is currently unable to absorb all MSDS members, with the resultant challenge of having frustrated military trained members sitting at home with no job prospects upon completion of the two-year MSDS training. According to the Implementation Instruction MSD System (DOD, 2005), the recruitment and selection processes do not just occur in isolation but form part of the broader HR processes, all aimed at maximising organisational performance. The Defence Review and the White Paper on Defence envisage a cost-effective one force concept for the SANDF comprising of a relatively small Regular Force and a Reserve Force which is sufficiently large. This may be realised through an employment approach which provides for the following:

- Young and fit members making up the bulk of deployable personnel and contributing to force rejuvenation.
- A smaller core component for the provision of administrative, training and management functions.
- A small top leadership and management team.

This approach is in line with the HR Strategy (DOD, 2010), which identifies three career stages as follows:

- The Military Skills Development System (MSDS). Members undergo training and are utilised for two years at the end of which some members will serve in the Reserves and others may get opportunities for service in the CSS.
- The Core Service System (CSS). Middle ranking personnel identified for medium-term service.
- The Senior Career System (SCS). Gradual downscaling of this group which forms the command and management cadre.

The MSD system generally forms the first career path for school leavers joining the SANDF and is regarded as the primary HR supply source for the Regular and Reserve Force. This system maintains an intake of young, fit and healthy members to augment the deployment capability and to prepare for the future through junior leader training.

According to Cohen and Moodley (2012), a fundamental principle of any decent work is to afford its workers job security, an element which is lacking when one looks at the current MSDS. Cohen and Moodley (2012) stated that additional to a source of income, decent work affords an individual dignity, stability and economic growth. Helfrich (2013) stated that the DODMV Minister made a call for young South Africans to join the SANDF but also acknowledged that budgetary constraints limit the numbers that can either be recruited or maintained upon completion of training. The Minister further indicated the need for the rejuvenation of the SANDF by recruiting young people from disadvantaged backgrounds into its ranks, especially the young, educated and skilled South Africans to serve in a technologically advanced Defence Force. The goals of the MSD system, according to the Implementation Instruction MSD System (DOD, 2005), are to:

- Induct the recruits into the SANDF.
- Train members on basic military and functional skills.
- Evaluate the development potential and suitability for continued service.
- Afford the members an opportunity to express their choice on whether to stay on in the Regulars or not.
- Ensure a quick throughput of young members to meet deployment contingencies.
- Ensure the availability of trained troops and junior leaders to sustain the Reserve Force.

Looking at global trends, and specifically the United States' (US) recruitment process, one realises how intense the recruitment process can be. Rech (2014) identified the cultures of militarism as being symptoms of nationalism and a product of the state's apparatus of persuasion and further provided three reasons for understanding military recruitment; firstly, it is seen as a formal mechanism militaries use to persuade and



enrol personnel and is as such regarded as a manifestation of the state's obligation to account for itself and its role. Secondly, the media of recruitment reflect and constitute contemporary militarisms, involving market research agencies and a range of corporate advertising, and thirdly, understanding the importance of military recruitment as it reveals possibilities for protesting militarism. On the downside, there has been escalating counter-recruitment movements in both the US and the United Kingdom (UK) which regarded recruitment as inequitable and that it bore the heaviest on youth from the working-class and youth of colour, and violated personal liberty. This point of view is backed by strong sentiments from Assoni and Sanandaji (2013) who regard it a societal goal that serving in the armed forces should have a proportional distribution and not be dominated by a few social groups, and further continued to highlight that the Department of Defence (1997 cited in Assoni & Sanandaji, 2013) stated in a debate over the establishment of a volunteer force that imbalances in socioeconomic representation would in the long run lead to a military composed of those from poor and minority backgrounds who would be forced to join the military as their last resort. This old notion is evidenced by the statement by the Democratic Leadership Council (1988 cited in Assoni & Sanandaji, 2013) that it cannot just be the poor and underprivileged of the United States alone who defend the country while more fortunate sons and daughters get a free ride, and an opportunity to progress with their education and careers. Assoni and Sanandaji (2013) emphasised this point by stating an old, popular phrase by Moore (1924), "It is a rich man's war and a poor man's fight".

Assoni and Sanandaji (2013) regard the military as one of the largest employers in the US, with about one in ten males serving in the military; however, the shift to a volunteer army is seen to have lured the underprivileged who do not have many outside options, into the armed forces. Incentives for recruits from lower socioeconomic background joining the military include employment opportunities and a chance to finance education. The argument brought forth by Assoni and Sanandaji (2013) is that the usage of economic incentives as a key to ending conscription was seen to be equivalent to luring the poor to their deaths. Assoni and Sanandaji (2013) believe that the changing tide, with the military moving towards being smaller and more technologically advanced, is making the military more stringent with their recruitment and selection. This created a tendency towards the opposite as it excluded those



without high school degrees, those scoring low in skills tests, individuals with criminal records or those with a poor health record from joining the military.

Rech (2014) claimed that the military competes with the civilian job market and uses recruitment incentives such as providing a better salary, housing, and educational opportunities to attract applicants. Additionally, the military invests heavily in advertising and recruitment campaigns. Contrary to Rech's (2014) assertion, Wagner (2016) warned of a turning point in which the declining budget of the Department of Defence is seen as eroding the bargaining position of recruiters dealing with American young adults, thus giving the civilian labour market a competitive advantage. Wagner (2016) further highlighted the disadvantages of a volatile recruitment environment, stating that it leads to higher recruiting costs and that such recruitment is likely to attract lower-quality candidates. Rech (2014) believes that the way of recruiting is seen sceptically as reducing military recruitment to a commodity in which a soldier is no longer a proud servant of a country but becomes a mere employee and where motivations for enlistment change from military service to employment. The sentiments raised with the US recruitment approach are thought-provoking and put a spotlight on the domestic situation which targets the previously disadvantaged communities and uses recruitment as a poverty alleviating strategy.

## **2.6 POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

Organisational policies help to establish boundaries and guidelines, and they direct best practices for what is acceptable behaviour in an organisation (Kokemuller, 2018). Policies allow employers to communicate to employees what is expected of them on the job. Kokemuller (2018), however, asserted that policies have to be aligned with the organisation's vision and mission statements and warns that policies will never be effective if implemented without due consideration of the type of culture such policies are meant to set the tone for, as policies also help to instil norms and values. Tysiac (2017) stated that well written, understandable, high-quality policies contribute to effective and efficient running of an organisation. Tysiac (2017) further advocated for a bottom-up approach, motivating that if there is input to policy creation or updating by employees from different levels, then the likelihood of compliance will be much better. This implies that the policies will guide employees on what is expected of them, within predefined limits and without constant intervention from management. Policies should

as such be written within the broad ambit of specific Acts and regulations. Organisations work within specific regulatory frameworks and need to be compliant with various regulatory and accreditation demands. According to O'Donnell and Vogenberg (2012), policies are not one-sided, they serve the needs of both the employers and employees and also advance organisational compliance as they guide and influence decisions. They are thus driven by laws and regulations, standards of practice, and institutional executive decisions governing a particular practice.

Power (2017) identified the undermentioned benefits of workplace policies:

- They inform employees of expectations, behaviour and performance standards.
- Facilitate decision-making through the provision of rules and guidelines.
- Enhance consistency and clear responses when dealing with organisational issues.
- Demonstrate a sense of good faith that employees will be treated equally and fairly.
- Provide a platform for managing complaints and misunderstandings.
- Guide the delegation of decision-making.
- Policies are a means of communicating information to new workers.
- In cases of litigation of a breach of employer obligations, the employer will be better equipped to defend claims.

According to Argue (2015), accurate HR planning is essential for the conversion of business strategies into specific HRM policies and practices, especially the recruitment and selection policies and practices. Argue (2015) further suggested that strong HR practices as well as innovative employee management practices contribute significantly to an organisation's competitive nature. For the HR Acquisition section, the responsibility is with the HR functionaries to operationalise the recruitment and selection policies. The key objective for HRM planning is to maximise the chances of an organisation getting the right number of people with the right knowledge, skills and abilities, in the right job role and in a timely and costly effective way (Argue, 2015). All this has to be informed by the relevant/applicable policies. Recruitment and selection

processes should also be undertaken within the framework of relevant legislative guidelines. Berman (2016) stressed the importance of the HR department, indicating that organisations which work in unison with their HR personnel, are likely to have a high level of employee satisfaction and an increased service delivery. According to Berman (2016), today's environment demands much more from HR managers. HR departments should have a clear strategy aligned to the vision of the organisation. It is thus essential to get the right HR personnel with appropriate competencies for the core business of the organisation. The vital task of aligning the recruitment and selection process to the organisational strategy can only be achieved if there is an effective and dedicated HR team.

### **2.6.1 Defence Act, Act 42 of 2002**

For prospective candidates joining the Defence Force it is essential that they be made aware of specific conditions or restrictions as stipulated in the Defence Act that may not be applicable in the general public sector, such as the following:

- The requirement or order to serve, move or reside anywhere in the Republic and the rest of the world.
- Restriction of the right to join or participate in the activities of trade unions and other organisations.
- For information security, members may be restricted from communicating certain information.

For employment in the Defence Force, the Act's stipulation includes that the member joining must not be younger than 18 years of age, be a South African citizen, place all of one's time at the disposal of the state and may not further the interests of any political party in the performance of one's duty. Every serving member is obliged to serve in time of war, state of national defence or state of emergency.

### **2.6.2 Department of Defence Human Resource Strategy 2010**

The HR strategy is ambitious in its aim of ensuring effective, efficient and economical management and administration of human resources. To fulfil this aim, the strategy

identified 14 HR strategic issues, from which the undermentioned nine end states were formulated:

- Rejuvenation of the HR composition.
- Affordable DOD HR composition.
- Practicing of the One Force Model.
- To establish a new way in which SANDF members must serve.
- Optimal representation.
- Excellent HR service delivery.
- Harmonious relationship between uniformed and civilian members.
- Retention of operational and functional expertise.
- Experience of labour peace by the DOD (2010, 2002).

An analysis of the aim of the HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) reflects the undermentioned “first principles” upon which the strategy is anchored:

- “Effective”, indicating the need for optimal management of the DOD’s HR to ensure the attainment of the set outputs or outcomes.
- “Efficient”, highlighting the need to function and produce so that HR inputs are optimally translated into service delivery outputs.
- “Economic”, indicating that the DOD’s HR composition should be in such a way that, given a specific quantity and quality of inputs, the cheapest option should be chosen.
- “Right Quantity”, referring to the number of personnel necessary to execute the DOD’s mission, that they should be adequate, appropriate and affordable.
- “Right Quality”, meaning that the DOD’s HR should possess the required knowledge, skills and attitude to be able to execute the DOD’s mission, and to carry out the functions and tasks of the posts in which they are staffed effectively, efficiently and economically, as well as ensure compliance with the requirements of military discipline contained in the Defence Act and Military Disciplinary Code.

- “Right Places” means that there must be a match between the individuals’ profiles and the requirements of the posts in which they serve. Personnel must be staffed and utilised according to the organisation’s needs.
- “Right Times” means that personnel should be staffed and utilised according to their ability and aspirations, but also according to the organisation’s needs.

According to the HR Strategy (DOD, 2010), a coherent HR strategy needs to be developed in order to give direction to the management of HR in the DOD. Planning is however hampered by the ambiguity regarding the appropriateness and affordability of the developing force design, force structure and establishment table. The HR Strategy acknowledges that some changes have been made and contributed significantly towards transformation such as representation; however, it acknowledges the negative impact some changes brought, such as lack of rejuvenation, low morale, and the absence of mechanisms essential for the facilitation of continuous throughput of members. These have a negative impact on the readiness, output and efficiency of the SANDF.

The Defence Review (RSA, 2015b) claims that the Defence Force acknowledges and advances the principles of being seen as a representative, equitable and gender-aligned national asset respected by South Africans as well as the international community for its military professionalism. This image must be supported by aligning the execution of processes and procedures to all the appropriate guidelines and legislative prescripts. The acquisition, career progression and exit from the DOD must be guided by the framework emanating from the broader strategy of the DOD, including the management of separated soldiers. Jordaan (2018) pointed out some challenges pertaining to the SANDF’s rejuvenation plan which necessitated research on benefits or opportunities for separated soldiers, as reflected below:

- The uncertainty around how the rejuvenation process should unfold.
- Failure to have a rejuvenation plan results in soldiers reaching the peak of their careers and stagnating in ranks, poor career advancement and minimising the force levels which could be utilised for operational deployment.

- The separation of soldiers from service and the support measures to prevent them from exhausting their benefits too quickly and becoming destitute.

This led to a rejuvenation plan through the implementation plan of a proposed Accelerated Retirement and Rejuvenation Programme (ARRP) (Jordaan, 2018). The HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) warns of the dichotomy faced by defence planners on where the limited resources should be directed. On the one hand, the primary function of the SANDF is the defence of the RSA within the reality that SA currently faces no external military threat, and on the other hand, is the expectation that the SANDF should execute secondary functions or ordered commitments. This dichotomy has an impact on how the DOD is perceived regarding the provision of HR processes and the implementation thereof. The HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) acknowledges the shortcomings of the Defence Review, that given the allocated budget, the proposed force design is not affordable. According to the White Paper on Defence, the SANDF will be an all-volunteer force, for political, strategic and economic reasons. The One Force Model, though it has still not materialised, aims to have a sufficiently large defence capability at a much more affordable cost. Its composition will be a relatively small Regular Force, inclusive of the civilian component, backed up by a large Part Time Force. The HR Strategy (DOD, 2010), however, indicates that the SANDF has failed to give effect to this. The Defence Review (RSA, 2015b) highlights the serious challenge of the SANDF being severely under-funded, a trajectory that is unfortunately ongoing. This declining budget has a negative impact on the recruitment and selection of potential candidates as some of them could be part of the Reserve Force. The unavailability of the guidelines for the implementation of the “One Force Model” impedes an integrated HR planning approach which incorporates maximum utilisation of the Reserve Force (ResF), to position for the new acquisitions. The DOD thus continues to spend too much on the Regular Force (RegF), thereby worsening an already strained position with regard to the operating budget (DOD, 2010).

The HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) identified the ageing of the force as an area of concern as it reduces the number of deployable personnel and thus the combat capability of the SANDF, with a negative impact on the force preparation, force employment and force sustainment. Operational effectiveness can be improved through rejuvenation, ensuring that the bulk of deployable personnel is young, fit and healthy. The DOD is

inundated with young, desperate job seekers, many without Mathematics and Science subjects which are in demand by the SANDF for combat, technical and professional requirements (DOD, 2010). The subject requirement is more pronounced in the SAMHS due to the types of opportunities available. HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) cautions about a mismatch between the quality of education of most school leavers who seek employment in the DOD and the educational qualifications required. It also acknowledges that most top performing school leavers are likely not to choose the DOD/SANDF as their employer of choice. HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) identified some critical success factors for the successful implementation of the HR strategic objectives:

- The DOD's HR management process must be coordinated from one nodal point.
- Competent, fit and healthy personnel who live the DOD's values.
- An establishment table that will make the DOD's HR gaps visible.
- The availability of post profiles for all posts that will enable the DOD to position personnel correctly.
- An appropriate mobility and redeployment mechanism to enable the DOD to reconfigure its HR composition in terms of the required ratios, affordability and efficiency.

HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) emphasizes the role of the SANDF in nation building during the training of young service men and women which should be comprehensive including the need to be disciplined and professional members of the SANDF, their contribution towards a safe and secure South Africa, civic education to instil a sense of pride in serving the nation and the instillation of a culture of military professionalism, thereby earning respect as role models in uniform and proud young South Africans.

### **2.6.3 White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service (1997)**

The White Paper on Human Resource Management (HRM) (RSA, 1997) promotes managerial autonomy, with the need to drive the development of departmental policies within the parameters of national policies. National departments are expected to develop HR strategies which reflect their strategic and operational plans, which are

aimed at meeting staffing needs, taking into consideration targets for a representative workforce.

The White Paper on HRM (RSA, 1997) further guides on using recruitment strategies which will attract candidates from various sectors of the population but specifically maximising those from the historically disadvantaged groups. The Paper shares a vision of the new Public Service where meticulous planning will ensure that an organisation has the needed quantity and quality of personnel, able to adapt quickly to changing work situations.

The embracing of technology is evident as the White Paper on HRM (RSA, 1997) highlights reliance on HRM information systems for provision of timely and accurate information on the effectiveness of the strategy which should reflect positions to be filled and contractual capacity in which new personnel will be employed. It further advocates for merit-based selection, ensuring that selected candidates were chosen on the basis of their expertise, skills, personal attributes and future potential.

#### **2.6.4 Public Service Regulations (RSA, 2001)**

The Regulations provide guidelines for HR executing authority on the need for the department to prepare a strategic plan which should include the objectives, functional mandates and service delivery improvement plan in a cost-effective way. Section B.2 specifies that the executing authority shall determine the organisational structure according to its core and supporting functions and grade proposed new jobs according to the job evaluation system. An acquisition function should thus never be a haphazard activity but it has to be based on collaborative efforts between the Director HR and the different Directors who have scheduled courses in order to make a determination of the number of available posts.

Chapter 1D (a) of the Public Service Regulation (RSA, 2001) addresses HR planning, indicating the need for the executing authority to make an assessment of the number of personnel needed and the competencies required as well as the capacities in which the applicants will be appointed. The plan has to be within the available budget, covering HR recruitment, retention, deployment and development. The transformation



agenda has to be factored in, taking into consideration aspects such as gender, race and disability when planning.

### **2.6.5 Department of Defence Instruction (DODI) 00080 – Policy Directive on Inherent Rank-Age Requirements for the SANDF**

The Policy Directive on Inherent Rank-Age Requirements (RSA, 2002) justifies the need for the SANDF to recruit young, fit and healthy soldiers in order to be ready to respond to different contingencies in its defence of the country. This calls for a macro-human resource management plan which addresses a career design that counters stagnation and supports a way of serving which is flexible and developmentally focused. The Policy Directive on Inherent Rank-Age Requirements (DOD, 2002) identified the need for an employment ethos aligned with international practice where uniformed members execute the corporate mission in an efficient, effective and economic way. The throughput of recruits is essential for the rejuvenation of the SANDF and to maintain its composition alignment with the HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) as well as international rank-age practice. The Policy Directive on Inherent Rank-Age Requirements (DOD, 2002) highlights the inefficiency of the current service system as it has not catered for the envisaged rejuvenation, resulting in stagnation and many SANDF members exceeding the criteria for reasonable rank-age utilisation and thus not being fit for effective operational utilisation.

The Policy Directive on Inherent Rank-Age Requirements (DOD, 2002) identified some inherent macro organisational HR requirements essential for the SANDF to fulfil its mission as stated below:

- **Constitutional imperatives:** The DOD recognises the constitutional imperative of not discriminating unfairly on the grounds of age, amongst other aspects, and thus adopted the usage of the principle of inherent job requirements to justify the need for 'fair' age discrimination based on the need to satisfy the mission requirements of maintaining professionalism.
- **Age profile:** The DOD needs young, fit soldiers able to adapt to a constantly changing environment and to withstand physical and psychological stresses, with limited social responsibilities. This profile is age-related, applicable to South Africans 18 to 28 years old. Although the focus of this policy is on age, the

inherent requirements of jobs include traits such as knowledge, skills and abilities.

- **Physical fitness:** Fitness level is linked to age and is crucial as members might operate under extreme geographic conditions.
- **Technology:** This force multiplier increases the deterrence value of the DOD. Younger people are able to keep abreast of technological developments.
- **Discipline:** Discipline is essential to ensure the execution of the government's military policies and enables participation in the democratic processes of the country.
- **Career possibilities:** The military rank structure restricts progression towards more senior levels.

It can thus be deducted that the Defence Force HR acquisition strategy should be aligned to attract recruits who are relatively young, disciplined, physically and psychologically fit and able to deliver high quality military service under pressure.

Each service and corps within the SANDF has unique operational requirements which will help determine the ideal age category based on the HR profile necessary for optimum performance.

- **Combat personnel:** Combat posts need relatively young members, who are able to decide and act quickly but also able to endure extremely strenuous situations such as long deployment periods, execution of dangerous tasks and high levels of physical and psychological discomfort.
- **Combat support and support personnel:** The age and years of service are not as crucial as with combat posts as these members are not exposed to front-line situations and their work is less demanding physically. They may thus have slightly extended periods serving in a specific rank.
- **Specialist/Professional/Health care practitioners:** The military rank progression for this group is not linked to functional promotion and the rank-age guidelines could be relaxed as directed by the Surgeon General. However, for

those providing front-line medical support, it is expected of the SAMHS to provide young members who are physically and psychologically strong.

The aim of the Policy Directive on Inherent Rank-Age Requirements (DOD, 2002) is to facilitate the rejuvenation HR composition of the SANDF in accordance with the HR Strategy (DOD, 2010).

## **2.7 HUMAN RESOURCES ACQUISITION PRACTICE IN THE SANDF AND THE SAMHS**

The human resource acquisition process is one of the key processes that organisations depend on for the fulfilment of its mandate. According to Ekwoaba et al. (2015), organisational life is reliant on perspectives, attributes and values offered by individuals and these human traits can contribute immensely towards organisational success if managed effectively. This viewpoint is supported by Woodward's model which demonstrates the convergence of the employer and employee's needs to the benefit of both. Any organisation is only as good as the proficiencies of its employees, and similarly, the employee relies on opportunities offered by the employer for professional growth and prosperity.

It is essential for organisations to have formal and systematic recruitment and selection processes informed by the needs of the organisation and conducted according to organisational policies. This is supported by Ekwoaba et al. (2015) who asserted that recruitment should be a methodical process which involves the identification of vacancies based on the job analysis, job description and person specification before advertising. The subsequent selection process will then involve information gathering about qualified applicants, evaluating their qualifications and making decisions about employment. In line with Woodward's model, culture fit between the needs of the employer and the candidate will increase potential for success for both sides. The DOD, like many government departments, is annually inundated with applications from desperate employment-seeking youth, most without the mathematics and science subjects, which are in demand to meet technical, combat as well as professional HR requirements. The HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) acknowledges the sad reality of the South African youth desperately seeking employment opportunities and with little success for most. The strategy further

acknowledges the challenge of strong competition with many other employers also dependent the few top-performers from schools who meet requirements for employment opportunities in highly specialised environments, a situation which will take time to correct.

The concern of the high attrition rate of qualified and experienced personnel due to pull-factors of the labour market, perceptions of limited opportunities for career progression and the low morale worsen the situation. The HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) identifies the need to offer pre-employment ETD to deserving school leavers to bridge the gap to help them meet educational standards required for specific occupational classes, given the technology-based environment of the SANDF. This is done with the purpose of normalising the SANDF's representivity ratio in specialised occupational classes. The flipside is that serving members who do not have high technology skills required by the private sector do not leave the employment of the DOD due to the high unemployment rate, leading to stagnation and low morale. This situation highlights the imbalance of the force levels as there is no mechanism to ensure continuous throughput of personnel, and it thus creates a dilemma from the productivity and operational deployment point of view (DOD, 2010). This has a direct impact on the HR acquisition strategy of the SANDF. The DOD thus promotes Nation building and the development of a common South African identity through exposure to military norms and customs with emphasis on discipline development, empowerment, and global competitiveness.

The competition for candidates with science as a subject is equally problematic for the SAMHS, with medically-orientated ETD opportunities. The SAMHS offers South African youth excellent opportunities to serve in uniform through the MSDS programme. Study opportunities in the medical field, inclusive of pharmacy assistant, medicine, nursing diploma, veterinary science are then availed to successful candidates, with a pronouncement that selection in the indicated fields cannot be guaranteed and that such opportunities are subject to availability and further selection criteria in line with the requirements of specific institutions. The lack of intake in certain fields or the limited intake per field leads to candidates being placed in fields that they did not initially apply for and such discrepancies have a negative impact on HR acquisition processes.

**Table 2.2: Requirements for appointment in the SANDF**

| Requirements  |   | Documents  |
|---|---|--|
| SA Citizenship  | Medically fit (Compliance with health assessments including psychological assessment) | Copy of ID   |
| At least 18 years of age  | Ascribe to the Military Code of Conduct   | Copy of Grade 12 Certificate   |
| Younger than 23 years of age  | Willingness to serve in uniform   | A Short CV   |
| Graduates up to the age of 25   | Willingness to undergo Basic Military Training  | Copy of highest achieved qualification (e.g. Degree or National diploma) |
| No record of criminal offence or any pending case   | Not area bound  |  |
| Acceptance by a Military Selection Board  | Further Functional Training where applicable  |  |
| Pride, loyalty and courage are among the attributes that young men and women wanting to pursue a career in the military should have |   |  |

Source: Wingrin (2019), Morse (2014).

Ekwoaba et al. (2015) warned about elements of subjective judgement inherent in the recruitment and selection processes. It is thus essential for organisations to use multiple recruitment and selection strategies to minimise subjectivity and to improve fairness. Ekwoaba et al. (2015) stressed the need for human resource managers to have a deep understanding of organisational goals, objectives, policies, and practices in order to contribute positively and to make informed decisions about recruitment and selection processes.

On educational requirements for officership, Esterhuyse (2007) highlighted the importance of education as an integral part of the career path of officers. In some countries modern military professionalism requires potential candidates to have a first degree (B degree) as a minimum requirement for academic entry to be appointed as an officer. Esterhuyse (2007) further affirmed the importance of academic qualifications as a minimum requirement for becoming an officer in countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom. The SANDF is far behind in this regard. The military is seen by Fletcher and Chatelier (2000) as preparing individuals from a civilian society to perform as professional military personnel which, they indicated,

differs from other forms of training by its emphasis on discipline and the performance of physically and mentally demanding tasks. The Australian Defence Force White Paper (ADF, 2000) acknowledges the need to compete against other employers for the best and brightest. Due to a recruitment base of young Australians gradually shrinking, the ADF intensified its competition for skilled employees with good qualities. An assessment of its human resource management strategies and practices was undertaken specifically for qualities such as workplace attitudes and the relationship between standards of selection and training in relation to the concepts of organisational fit and commitment as well as the psychological contract. The main aim was to ensure the alignment of HR policy and practice with the realities of the labour market. This would ensure achievement and sustainment of a competitive advantage and thus a preferable position in the marketplace. Benchmarking with developed countries should help improve the human resource acquisition practices of the DOD and specifically the SAMHS. Besides the SANDF's core responsibility of protecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and people of South Africa, it also has an inherent role of contributing towards the upliftment of communities and the country's economic development through opportunities such as the MSDS.

Making career decisions means a lot for the individual in terms of guiding and shaping one's life because the choice of profession for an individual is the means of income-generation, job satisfaction, providing security, and success. Understanding career choices and career decisions of individuals is an important component of recruitment and retention strategies.

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

Human resource acquisition provides a gateway through which new employees join an organisation and is thus one of the critical functions in any organisation. This chapter provided content-linked human resource acquisition practices. It is clear that if HR acquisition is not done accordingly, it will affect the operational readiness of the SAMHS. The SAMHS as part of the SANDF requires men and women who are fit and capable to provide quality health services to the SANDF members and their families. The next chapter focuses on the methodology.

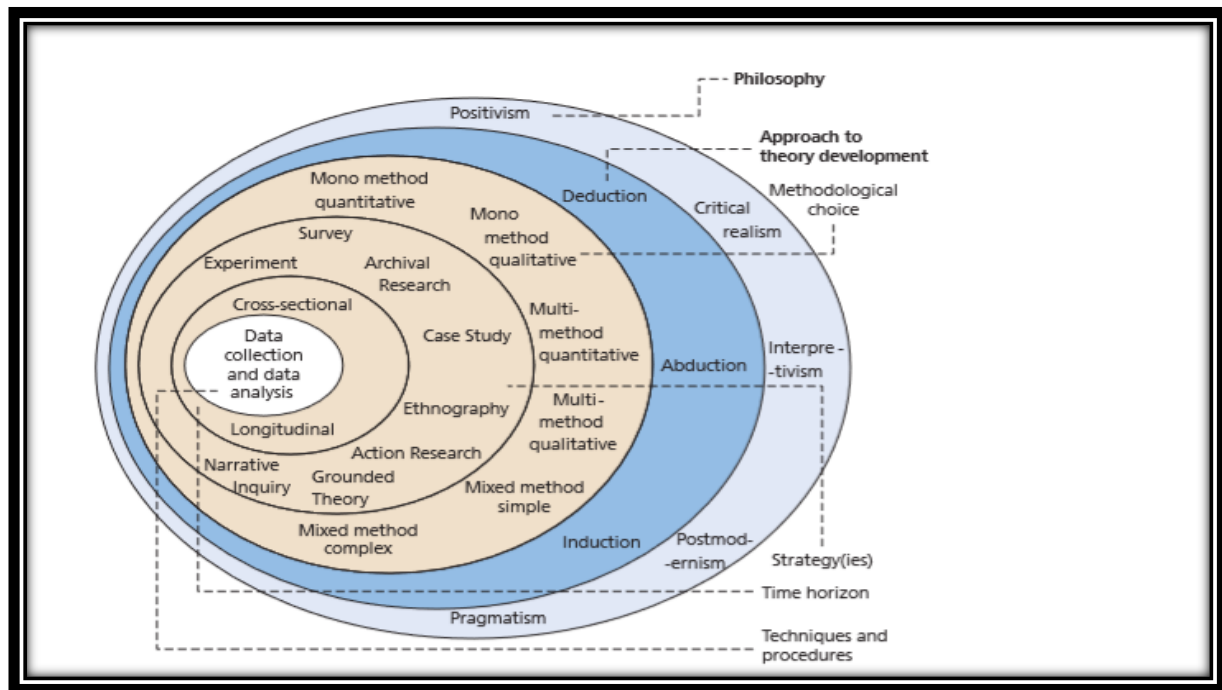
## **CHAPTER 3: THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a blueprint of how the researcher conducted the research. The methodology adopted by the researcher outlines the plan of how the research unfolded but also forms the foundation on which the entire research rested and thus had a great bearing on the reliability of the results. This study used a mixed methods research approach which has elements of both quantitative and qualitative research to interrogate the human resources acquisition processes of the SAMHS. The chapter highlights the philosophical foundation and approaches to theory development; it also outlines the research approach, sampling strategy, methods used to collect data and explains how data was analysed. The researcher concludes the chapter by indicating the factors that were taken into consideration to ensure that the research was conducted in accordance with ethical principles.

### **3.2 PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION**

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) asserted that throughout different stages of research, the researcher will make some assumptions which constitute the philosophical assumptions, namely ontology, epistemology and axiology. According to Saunders et al. (2019), ontological assumptions are assumptions based on realities encountered by the researcher on the study and shape the way in which the researcher sees the study. The researcher's worldview commonly informs the researcher's choice of what research to do. Epistemological assumptions have to do with knowledge, focusing on what, for the researcher, is legitimate and acceptable. Such assumptions reflect the researcher's beliefs about human knowledge and how the knowledge can be communicated through to others. The focus of axiological assumptions is on ethics and values. Axiology reflects how the researcher's values influence the study. These basic assumptions guide how the researcher will go about conducting the study and they constitute the research philosophy which forms the foundation for the choice of methodology as demonstrated in the diagram below.



**Figure 3.1: The Research Onion**

Source: Saunders et al. (2019).

Saunders et al. (2019) identified five major philosophies as positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism and pragmatism. The table below reflects the common philosophies from which one, interpretivism, was chosen by the researcher and is discussed in more detail.

**Table 3.1: Comparison of five research philosophical positions**

| Ontology  | Epistemology  | Axiology  | Typical methods   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Positivism</b>   |   |   |   |
| <b>The focus is on universalism, which denotes that there is just one true reality which is real, external and independent. Things are orderly.</b> | It follows a scientific method and deals with facts which can be observed and are measurable.<br><br>Provides causal explanation. | It is value-free and the researcher is neutral, independent and detached from what is being researched, thus maintaining an objective stance. | It is highly structured, using large samples. As it is typically quantitative, measurement plays a crucial role when analysing data. It is deductive in nature. |



| Ontology  | Epistemology  | Axiology   | Typical methods  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Critical realism</b>   |   |  |  |
| <p><b>The focus is on the empirical, the actual and the real, it is thus stratified (layered).</b></p> <p><b>Objective structures and causal mechanisms.</b></p>  | <p>Epistemological Relativism and believes knowledge is historically situated and not permanent.</p> <p>Facts are seen to be social constructions. Provides a historical causal explanation.</p>          | <p>The research is value-laden with acknowledgement by the researcher of a biased world view and cultural experience. The researcher tries to maintain objectivity and to minimise bias and errors.</p>            | <p>It is in-depth and historically situated. Analyses pre-existing structures. Various methods and types of data to fit subject matter.</p>  |
| <b>Interpretivism</b>   |   |  |  |
| <p><b>It is based on complex and rich flux of experiences, processes and practices.</b></p> <p><b>Assigns multiple meanings and interpretations and is socially constructed through culture and language.</b></p>                                       | <p>Key focus is on narratives, perceptions and interpretations.</p> <p>Theories and concepts are regarded as too simplistic. Seeks new understandings and worldviews as contribution.</p>                 | <p>Research that is value-bound with the researcher being part of what is researched. It is subjective and the main contribution is from the researcher's interpretations.</p> <p>The researcher is reflexive.</p> | <p>Typically inductive. Uses small samples.</p> <p>In-depth, detailed investigations and mainly uses qualitative methods of analysis.</p>  |
| <b>Postmodernism</b>  |   |  |  |
| <p><b>Nominal. Complex and rich with a flux of processes and experiences.</b></p> <p><b>Constructed socially through power relations.</b></p> <p><b>Assigns meanings and interpretations, with some realities dominated and silenced by others.</b></p> | <p>Dominant ideologies drive what counts as 'truth' and 'knowledge'.</p> <p>The focus is on absent, silent and oppressed.</p> <p>Meanings. Power relations get exposed and dominant views challenged.</p> | <p>Value-constituted research. The research and researcher get embedded in power relations.</p> <p>Some narratives get repressed and silenced at the expense of others.</p>  | <p>Typically deconstructive. There is an in-depth investigation of anomalies and absences.</p> <p>Uses a broad range of data types and commonly qualitative methods of analysis.</p> |

| Ontology  | Epistemology   | Axiology   | Typical methods  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Pragmatism</b>   |  |  |  |
| <b>The consequences of ideas stem from 'reality'.</b><br><b>Flux of processes, experiences and practices. It is complex and rich.</b> | Focus is on the practical meaning of knowledge in certain contexts.<br>Focus is on problems, practices and relevance.<br>Problem solving and informed future practice as contribution. | The research is value-driven.<br>Research initiated and sustained by researcher's doubts and beliefs.<br>Researcher reflexive. | Uses various methods, qualitative, quantitative, mixed, multiple or action research.<br>Follows research problem and question.<br>Emphasizes practical solutions and outcomes. |

Source: Saunders et al. (2019).

The researcher followed an interpretivist philosophy, also referred to by De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2011) as phenomenological approach. According to Saunders et al. (2019), interpretivists see humans as different from physical phenomena as they create meanings, and it is these meanings that interpretivists study. Saunders et al. (2019) further argued that people of different cultural backgrounds and under different circumstances will create and experience social realities differently. This viewpoint is supported by De Vos et al. (2011) indicating that people continuously define, create, interpret and justify making sense of their world. Interpretivists create new, richer understandings of social worlds and contexts by collecting what is meaningful to their research participants. Generally, language, culture and history count for interpretivists. Interpretivism is subjectivist and the axiological implication is the recognition that their own values and beliefs significantly contribute to research process. The interpretivist philosophy prompts the researcher to take an empathetic stance; however, it is often difficult for the interpretivist to penetrate and understand the participant's social world, from the participants' point of view (Saunders et al., 2019).

This study mainly focused on analysing a variety of recruitment and selection documents in order to gain insight into the exact processes followed by the SAMHS and to be able to compare with best practice in the HR acquisition process. Through written words from various documents the researcher sought to understand the

process undertaken, the rationale and what the outcome of the process was. De Vos et al. (2011) believe that a researcher reads to uncover meaning deeply embedded within text and how the various parts link to the whole. The researcher also conducted interviews with two key HR functionaries to supplement data gathered from records but mainly to understand what their impression of the acquisition process is. Through an interview, a participant was able to take the researcher through the whole process that is undertaken in real life before making a decision on which candidates to select. As an in-depth study, the participants needed to provide an in-depth description of their own experience of the recruitment and selection process. The researcher wanted the participants to not only give information about the process, but also to express their perception of the effectiveness of the process, what the process means, to identify strong points and weaknesses and how they feel the process can be bettered (Neuman, 2014).

### **3.3 APPROACH TO THEORY DEVELOPMENT**

Saunders et al. (2019) explained that one's research may or may not involve the use of theory, but that even though the theory may not be explicit in the methodology, it will usually be evident in the presentation of findings and conclusions. Saunders et al. (2019) further explained that two contrasting approaches, deductive or inductive, are commonly adopted. With deductive reasoning the conclusion is drawn from theory-derived premises, logically implying that when all the premises are true then the conclusion will be true. In situations where the research starts with the theory developed from the academic literature and a research strategy is designed to test the theory, then a deductive approach will be used. It often seeks to explain causal relationships between variables. Deductive reasoning is mainly used in the natural sciences and theory development is subjected to rigorous testing.

With inductive reasoning, which was used for this study, the logic argument leaves a gap between the observed premises and conclusion. This research started with data collection to explore a phenomenon, namely the SAMHS' HR acquisition process, after which an inductive approach was used to build a theory. This form of reasoning stems from social science researchers being critical of a deductive approach which focuses only on the cause-effect relation without any consideration of the interpretation of the social world by humans. This understanding is the strength of

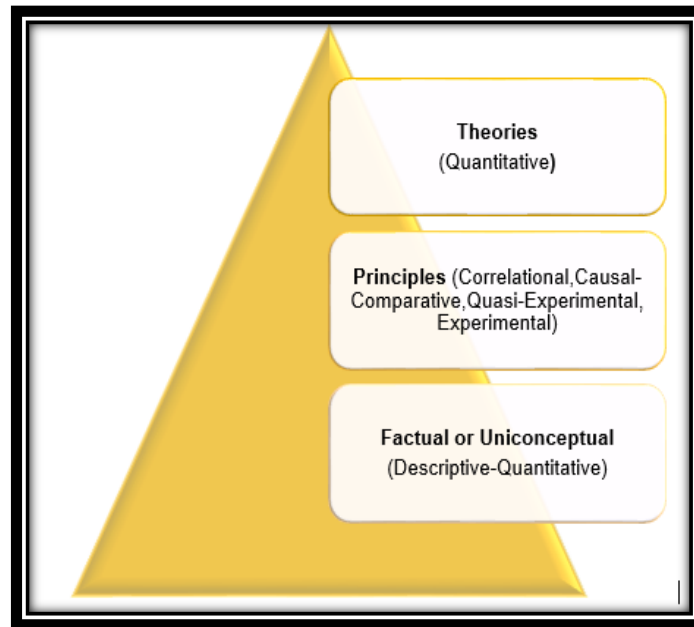
inductive reasoning as it moves away from regarding humans as unthinking objects who respond mechanistically to specific circumstances (Saunders et al., 2019).

### **3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH**

Creswell (2014) stated that research approaches are plans and procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. Brink et al. (2013) support the description, adding further that the research approach is informed by the research problem and purpose of the study as well as the researcher's wish to generalise the findings. The identified research approaches are qualitative research, which helps the researcher explore and understand the meaning individuals ascribe to a social problem; quantitative research, which examines the relationship among variables in order to test objective theories; and mixed methods research, which involves the collection and integration of both quantitative and qualitative data, using designs that are likely to involve philosophical assumptions as well as theoretical frameworks (Creswell, 2014). This study followed a mixed methods research approach; however, the researcher here the researcher first provides a broad outline of all three approaches.

#### **3.4.1 Quantitative research designs**

According to De Vos et al. (2011), quantitative research establishes, confirms or validates relationships and develops generalisations through the answering of questions about measured variables and how they relate to each other. It is structured and its processes are mainly pre-determined. Quantitative researchers collect numerical data, analyse it using statistical procedures and then draw conclusions. In a quantitative study, the researcher relies on deductive reasoning, moving from a certain premise and drawing logical conclusions (De Vos et al., 2011). This description is shared by Lunenburg and Irby (2008) who explained that quantitative studies often use hypotheses to test theories that have been developed to explain phenomena. Lunenburg and Irby (2008) identified four categories of quantitative research design, namely descriptive, correlational, causal-comparative, quasi-experimental and experimental research, as reflected in Figure 3.2 below.



**Figure 3.2: Hierarchy of quantitative research**

Source: Lunenburg and Irby (2008).

- **Descriptive research**, lying at the bottom of the pyramid, (Figure 3.2), reflects the basic form of research. Lunenburg and Irby (2008) referred to descriptive research as answering basic informational questions of what, when, where, who, how or which. The phenomenon is described from the perspective of the researcher or the research participants and the inquiry describes elementary information, activities or behaviour. Conclusions drawn thus report on facts but should also accommodate the researcher's conclusions connecting data to previous research done or to theory.
- **Correlational research** is grounded in the relationship and interactions between variables. This research is not a causal-comparative research: however, the extent to which the variables are related and the direction are important. In situations where there is a relationship between two or more variables, the variables are correlated, and the correlation interpreted based on direction and strength. The association can either be positive, with one variable increasing as the other also increases and vice versa (Lunenburg and Irby, 2008).
- **Causal-comparative research**, also referred to as ex post facto (after the fact), is used to determine the cause-and-effect relationship between variables and is regarded as a basic research design. Unlike with experimental research, in

causal-comparative research the independent variable cannot be manipulated and cannot be controlled as it has already occurred. Causal-comparative research also uses at least two comparison groups that are compared to a dependent variable (Lunenburg and Irby, 2008).

- **Quasi-experimental research** may be done where it is necessary to make causal inferences but where true experimentation cannot be conducted. This could be due to the inability to assign participants randomly to experimental and control groups, or to being unable to secure a control group (Lunenburg and Irby, 2008).
- **Experimental research designs** are held in high esteem and their essence is in the random selection from the population of the researcher's interest and the random assignment to treatment and control groups. Experimental research requires the manipulation of at least one independent variable and to try and hold all other variables constant except for the dependent variable (Lunenburg and Irby, 2008).

### 3.4.2 Qualitative research designs

Qualitative research, according to De Vos et al. (2011), is used to help the researcher understand a complex situation or phenomenon better, often being exploratory in nature. Through inductive reasoning, the researcher draws inferences about general phenomena from specific observations. The qualitative paradigm elicits the meaning a participant ascribes to experience and perceptions and it seeks to understand social life, incorporating values and beliefs. The researcher thus seeks to understand and describe rather than to predict human behaviour. Lunenburg and Irby (2008) asserted that with qualitative studies, data, from which a theory is designed, is usually collected first. Qualitative research seeks intense understanding by carefully examining words, as presented by the participants, actions and records. Through logical thinking the researcher searches for patterns and connections to make sense of the ambiguity. The emerging patterns of meaning are then closely examined with the researcher staying close to the participant's world as experienced and contextualising the findings (Lunenburg and Irby, 2008). The researcher should avoid making broad generalisations. Lunenburg and Irby (2008) identified four major categories of

qualitative research, namely phenomenological research, case study research, ethnographic research, and grounded theory research.

- **Phenomenological research**, according to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), is regarded as a basic form of research and describes phenomena in our world from the participants' perspective. The researcher ought to establish from theory or prior research the specifics of what is to be studied about the phenomenon. Deep and rich phenomena descriptions are gathered through interviews, participant observation and focus group discussions. Although it is ideal that the researcher should not have pre-conceived notions about the phenomenon, it is highly unlikely that the researcher will be removed from pre-suppositions based on the held perspectives or paradigm of the researcher. The researcher's perspectives should thus be reflected. The interpretation of the phenomena will thus make it possible to inform, support or challenge policy, procedures and actions in organisations or society. Lunenburg and Irby (2008) explained that different qualitative techniques, approaches, or methods may be used including interviews, focus groups, participant or direct observation, and document analyses. Table 3.2 below explains the techniques.

**Table 3.2: Phenomenological techniques**

| Phenomenological technique and approach  | Explanation  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Focus groups</b></p> <p>A focus group involves interviewing of a group and not an individual. From the research done on a specific topic, the interviewer then asks the group specific questions and generates data from observing the interactions and communication among participants. Compared to individual interviews, using Focus Groups is more economical in terms of time and resources.</p> | <p>It is advisable to have a group of four to 12 members. The session may be facilitated by the researcher or a well-trained facilitator to enhance group participation and to generate rich data. An interview protocol will help channel the type of questions asked; however, there is often a tendency for group members to divert from the topic and get influenced by other members' inputs.</p> |
| <p><b>Participant or direct observation</b></p> <p>In this observational approach, the researcher uses all five senses for a comprehensive description of the people, the setting, activities and the meaning of what was observed. An observation is also made</p>  | <p>The researcher intentionally puts self in the context of the phenomenon under study, and as a participant observer, engages fully and shares the participants' experiences. The researcher may have other researchers observing as well. When doing direct</p>  |



| Phenomenological technique and approach   | Explanation   |
|---|---|
| of how the participants relate and interact with one another.   | observation, the researcher may not influence the discussion but must just be a quiet observer.   |
| <b>Document analysis</b><br>Document analysis involves the critique of documents and to extract significant data, meaning and relevance from a specific phenomenon and context. Usable documents include historical documents, electronic media, photos, newspapers, books, personal entries, clinical records and newspapers amongst the many. | With this technique, the researcher will define purpose, collect applicable documents for review and analysis. Labelling, colour-coding and numbering are used to assist the researcher to deal with the different themes as they emerge. |

Source: Lunenburg and Irby (2008).

- **Case studies**, according to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), represent specific explorations of individuals, groups, cohorts, organisations, communities or programmes. A single case study design focuses on an individual or group and a multiple case study design focuses on multiple individuals or various communities related to a similar phenomenon. Once enough data is collected, a compilation of case data is made, with adequate explanation of deep description, telling the story of an individual, programme or organisation from a chronological perspective, using specific themes. Reporting on themes, categories and sub-categories is done as data is reduced from the general to specific. As interpretation is done, the researcher needs to establish the significance of the findings and link them to the theoretical framework.
- In **ethnographic research**, the researcher conducts fieldwork, working closely with the participant/s and using techniques such as participant observation during interviews, videography, photography or document analysis. Trust is essential and if built, thick and rich descriptions are likely to be generated however, the researcher's own biases should not influence the outcome of data gathering. To conduct fieldwork the researcher also needs to gain the trust of the gatekeepers.
- **Grounded theory research** gathers data about a specific phenomenon, which is then used to generate a theory inductively. According to Lunenburg and Irby



(2008), grounded theory has three elements, namely concepts, categories and propositions, as discussed below:

- Concepts form the basic units of analysis. Theories are not built with raw data, i.e. actual incidents as reported or observed; however, these incidents are analysed as potential indicators of a phenomena and are thus given conceptual labels. Incidents are then compared, and similar phenomena then named with the same term, thus working towards the accumulation of basic units for a theory.
- Categories represent concepts; however, they are higher in level and more abstract. Similar to concepts, categories are generated using the same analytic process of indicating similarities and differences. Categories are regarded as the cornerstone of theory development as they provide the means for theory integration. Categories emanate from the grouping of concepts. What the researcher might identify during coding, is that some concepts may seem different in form, but they may be grouped together as a category as they represent activities directed towards a similar process.
- Propositions indicate generalised relationships drawn between a category and its concepts but also between discrete categories. Grounded theory is not generated then tested thereafter, rather, it is derived, through inductive reasoning from studying the phenomenon it represents. Systemic data collection and analysis of a specific phenomenon leads to discovery, development and provisional verification. Data collection, analysis and theory should thus be in a reciprocal relationship with one another. With grounded theory, the beginning is never with a theory then try prove it but it begins with an area of study then relevant aspects to that area allowed to emerge.

Neuman (2014) highlighted the differences between quantitative and qualitative styles listed in Table 3.3:

**Table 3.3: Differences between quantitative and qualitative styles**

| QUANTITATIVE   | QUALITATIVE                                  |
|--|--|
| Measures objective data                              | Constructs social reality                    |
| Focus is on variables                                | Focus is on interactive processes            |
| Reliability is main indicator of excellence          | Authenticity is main indicator of excellence |
| Adopts a value-free stance                           | Values are present and explicit              |
| Context does not have direct bearing on the research | Situationally constrained                    |
| Involves many cases                                  | Involves few cases                           |
| Mainly uses statistical analysis                     | Mainly uses thematic analysis                |
| Researcher remains detached                          | Researcher remains involved                  |

Source: Neuman (2014).

### 3.4.3 Mixed methods research designs

Mixed methods research involves the collection and integration of both qualitative and quantitative data, using designs that are likely to involve philosophical assumptions as well as theoretical frameworks (Creswell, 2014). De Vos et al. (2011) described it as an approach where qualitative and quantitative approaches complement each other to produce an in-depth understanding and analysis of a complex research problem. Neuman (2014) advised on combining features from qualitative and quantitative studies as this will enhance the richness and dynamism of social life. Triangulation, according to Neuman (2014), allows for the mixing of approaches in order to build on the complementary strengths of the research approaches. This viewpoint is supported by Lunenburg and Irby (2008) who stated that the usage of mixed methods lends credibility to the study as it triangulates the data and thus provides rigour to the study. They further viewed the approach as assisting in bridging the schism between qualitative and quantitative research as it combines the techniques, methods and approaches of both. Researchers are however warned that the use of mixed methods research designs can be time consuming.

One may wonder whether the usage of mixed methods research brings any value more than what the qualitative and quantitative approaches individually would provide. De Vos et al. (2011) regard the following to be the value of mixed methods research:

- Makes it possible for the researcher to deal with confirmatory and exploratory questions and thus to verify theory as well as generate theory in one study.
- Allows for stronger inferences to be made as it uses the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research.
- Provides comprehensive evidence of studying a specific phenomenon.
- Allows for collaboration to be done across the adversarial relationship that at times exists between quantitative and qualitative research.
- Caters for divergent views and perspectives which help to reveal the multi-faceted nature of some phenomena.
- Promotes multiple world views or paradigms.
- Gives the researcher freedom to use various methods to address a research problem.
- Minimises bias and improves validity.

According to De Vos et al. (2011), the mixed methods research designs often use time orientation, with the quantitative and qualitative phases either being done concurrently, thus being independent of each other, or being sequential, with one being dependent on the other to some extent. For this study, the quantitative and qualitative phases were run parallel. Creswell (2014) identified the following four types of commonly used mixed methods research designs:

- Explanatory sequential mixed methods – the researcher starts by conducting quantitative research, then after the analysis of results builds on them using qualitative research to provide a detailed explanation. De Vos et al. (2011) corroborated this description, adding that priority is not equal and is given to quantitative data.
- Exploratory sequential mixed methods – qualitative research is done first to explore the participants' views and the information obtained from analysis is then used to build into the quantitative phase. From the exploration, the researcher identifies qualitative themes and subsequently uses the information to guide a quantitative examination (De Vos et al., 2011).

- Transformative mixed methods – uses both qualitative and quantitative data, either converged or sequentially. One of the two designs gets embedded within a larger design. De Vos et al. (2011) described this as providing a secondary, supportive role which is useful when a single dataset is not adequate.
- Convergent parallel mixed methods, referred to by De Vos et al. (2011) as triangulation mixed methods, is the most commonly used method. In this one-phase design, quantitative and qualitative data is collected simultaneously and then merged to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem.

The inquiry for this study sought to use convergent parallel mixed methods. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected around the same period and then the overall results were interpreted to best understand the situation under study. The depth of open-ended questions helped to direct the researcher's inquiry for evidence as was the case with acquisition process and this also helped to improve the trustworthiness of the research as the phenomenon of interest was explored from various angles. Creswell (2014) stated that the research methods inform processes for data collection, analysis and interpretation.

### **3.5 SAMPLING STRATEGY**

Sampling enables the researcher to decide on the objects, persons or events from which data will be drawn (Brink et al., 2012). The researcher used a mixed methods sampling strategy which, according to De Vos et al. (2011), involves the combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques used creatively in order to answer the research questions from the mixed methods research design. The approach allows for different sampling strategies and for some results to be shown quantitatively but it also caters for deeper exploration through the qualitative part. The researcher used document analysis as the main sampling strategy.

Bowen (2009) defined document analysis as a systematic procedure for evaluating documents and deriving conclusions from them in a certain context. According to Bowen (2009), qualitative data has to be analysed to elicit meaning, to enhance understanding and to develop empirical knowledge. De Vos et al. (2011) described document analysis within the context of qualitative research, stating that it involves a

study of existing documents or analysis of written material containing information on the phenomenon under study. Since the applicants' personal files were used in this study, the various forms and documents also formed an important data source for quantitative data. De Vos et al. (2011) further differentiated between primary and secondary sources, with primary sources being the original written material and secondary sources being derived from the original source, and thus needing to be scrutinised thoroughly for accuracy.

Bowen (2009) explained specific functions that documents can serve in research:

- Provision of background information or data on the context within which research participants operate, thus providing historical insight. This will assist the researcher to contextualise data which was collected through interviews.
- Information contained in documents may help generate interview questions that were not thought of before. One method can thus complement another method.
- The researcher may get supplementary research data from documents to add to the knowledge base. Documents may assist data gathering especially when details are forgotten or where events can no longer be observed.
- Various drafts of certain documents or periodic reports may provide a means of tracking change and development. This may help the researcher get a clear picture of the organisation's performance over time.
- The documents may be analysed as a way of verifying findings from other sources. The evidence may be contradictory or corroboratory and may need the researcher to investigate further. Data convergence from different sources increases the trustworthiness of the findings.

De Vos et al. (2011) highlighted the importance of checking for the authenticity and credibility of the documents. According to Bowen (2009), documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem. The sentiment is supported by De Vos et al. (2011) highlighting how important it is for the researcher to read critically and to interrogate the documents whilst undertaking a systematic coding system. De Vos et al. (2011)

identified the advantages and disadvantages of document analysis, as listed in Table 3.4 below.

**Table 3.4: Advantages and disadvantages of document analysis**

| Advantages  | Disadvantages   |
|---|---|
| Low cost (relatively)   | Records may be incomplete, causing gaps in the database                     |
| Researcher does not have any influence over the contents of documents                         | Bias, as documents were not meant for research purposes                     |
| Very personal information that the participant might never share may be obtained from records | Documents may become illegible over time or some documents may be destroyed |
| The researcher does not have to make personal contact with the participants                   | Poor record keeping or inaccessibility due to security classification       |
|   | Poor linguistic skills may influence the contents of documents              |
|   | Lack of a standard format may make comparison difficult                     |
|   | It may be difficult to ascertain the origins of some documents              |

Source: De Vos et al. (2011).

Bowen (2009) indicated the importance of document analysis in combination with other research methods as a means of triangulation, where the same phenomenon is studied through a combination of methodologies. Besides document analysis, the researcher also collected data through interviews to improve the credibility of the study and to minimise the potential for bias. When collecting qualitative data from the participants, the researcher used purposive sampling and was selective about the participants for the study on the basis that they needed to have information that was specifically needed for the study. The explicit purpose of sampling decisions is to obtain the richest possible source of data to help answer the research questions (Creswell, 2014). Creswell further identified the three commonly used sampling strategies as stratified purposeful sampling, criterion sampling and snowball sampling. For this study, the researcher identified stratified purposive sampling as the best sampling strategy as the participants were selected according to pre-selected criteria

relevant to this study's research question. Creswell (2014) stated that purposive sampling is often successful when data review and analysis are not done as sequential steps but rather done in conjunction with data collection.

### 3.6 SAMPLE SIZE

De Vos et al. (2011) stated that reference to the concept *sample* implies that there is a population from which a sample is drawn. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2009), it is often difficult to make a decision about how large a sample size should be, and they offered the following possible factors for consideration when determining a sample size:

- What the research objectives are.
- The precision level desired by the researcher.
- The confidence level or risk acceptable in predicting the precision level.
- The extent of variability in the population.
- Possible constraints in terms of cost and time.
- The population size itself.

Brink et al. (2012) emphasised the importance of carefully deciding on the sample size, indicating that it will help to minimise sampling errors. It was essential for the researcher to identify sites where data could be collected for the study. The sample size was guided by the type of research design used, and as the researcher was using both qualitative and quantitative approaches, there were sample sizes for both approaches:

- Non-personal documents were considered likely to provide information on processes followed or on guidelines for the execution of specific issues pertaining to recruitment and selection. Various records, documents and correspondence on the recruitment and selection process were used for data gathering. The nature of these records made it difficult to quantify the sample size.
- For personal records of members who went through the selection process, the researcher analysed 50 files from the annual selection documents of candidates interviewed for the SAMHS intake during the period 2016 to 2019. Though other

Services had an intake, the SAMHS did not have any intake for 2017. For this, quantitative data probability sampling was used with the researcher using 50 files to ensure that an adequate numeric description of trends could be made. On average, the SAMHS invites 150 candidates per year for selections. The researcher thus planned to use 50 of the 450 personal files.

- Two HR functionaries who are involved in the recruitment and selection process were interviewed and in-depth information obtained. According to Brink et al. (2012), for this, qualitative data it is not necessary to have a larger sample. Purposive sampling was done specifically to ensure that an accurate reflection of meaning is obtained.

### **3.7 DATA COLLECTION**

Kabir (2016) identified data collection as one of the most crucial stages in the research process and explained it as the gathering of information on specific phenomena in a systematic way which will enable the researcher to answer the indicated research questions and to evaluate the outcomes. Accurate data collection is essential in order to capture quality evidence which will lead to rich data analysis and result in the provision of convincing and credible answers to posed questions. According to Kothari (2004), in an experimental research, primary data is collected whilst doing the experiments but with surveys and descriptive type research, various methods are used for collecting primary data, including observation or direct communication with respondents through personal interviews. With the collection of data from records, De Vos et al. (2011) indicated the need for the researcher to check the credibility, authenticity and meaning of documents under study. The need for authenticity was reiterated by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) who explained the importance of first assessing the source for authenticity, and thereafter evaluating the accuracy of the data as it may help uncover distortions or fraud. Burnett (2009) regarded records as literally meaning paper documentation but indicated that it may alternatively be about any materials that can be 'read' to extract inner meanings. Once authenticity is established, the researcher will be in a position to put together an account of events linked to the research problem, thus synthesising the information to identify similarities and emerging patterns (Cohen et al., 2007).



The main source documents were identified as the records used by the Human Resource Acquisition section of the SAMHS for the recruitment and selection of potential MSD candidates. The documents were thoroughly scrutinised for detailed information on the acquisition process followed. The documents were checked for legibility, completeness, accuracy, consistency and content. The researcher was, however, fully aware of certain limitations as highlighted by Brink et al. (2013) that records may not be completely accurate as some facts could be distorted or omitted or some records may not be made available due to the confidential nature of some information. The researcher also conducted open-ended interviews with specific HR functionaries to get data on the process followed in SAMHS for the recruitment and selection of candidates. The primary reason for doing this was to get first-hand information from people directly involved with the acquisition process as, from experience, they will be able to share information that one would not ordinarily get from records and policy documents. The researcher also compared the information provided to information on other records such as policies and various legislative documents to assess the actual process against what ought to be as gleaned from various sources of information.

### **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

Analysing data enables the researcher to identify trends and exceptions to the usual occurrences, and according to De Vos et al. (2011), the researcher may use individual or combined techniques, which may include the following:

- Content analysis, which is systematic and numeric, may help to quantify the frequency of elements within the documents.
- Textual analysis, which puts emphasis on interpreting meaning from the document and is used mainly with the qualitative and interpretivist approach.
- Semiology emphasises the use of signs which indicate complex meaning beyond the surface of the text.
- Linguistic analysis explores the meaning of certain words and phrases.

Brink et al. (2012) stated that the researcher needs to decide on the methods of exploring and organising raw data and how the data will be analysed and interpreted

so as to make sense of it. Quantitative data can be organised in different ways, giving the researcher an impression of patterns, outliers or gaps in the data. The researcher may use spreadsheets to help sort out the data, code, use graphs or calculate. Creswell (2014) expressed data analysis in qualitative research as an ongoing and non-linear process in which data collection, processing, analysis and reporting are intertwined and not just a series of successive steps.

For this study the main focus for analysis was on assessing various documents used by the SAMHS' HR section for the recruitment and selection process. This was to enable the researcher to identify what the actual practice in the SAMHS is and the gathered information would then be compared against information obtained from policies and regulations as well as others' best practices as indicated in the literature review. This was done in order to gauge performance against the guidelines on how the acquisition process should unfold from beginning to end, and thus determine where the shortfall is. From the practice side, information was primarily from records but it was augmented with the information obtained from the participants. The information collected from the participants during interviews enabled the researcher to augment information not available in the documents.

The researcher established how the data gathered contributed to and made meaning of the recruitment and selection practices. Creswell (2014) explained this process as consisting of three elements, namely, noticing, collecting and reflecting. The explanation is that while the researcher reflects on collected data, certain gaps would be noticed, requiring the researcher to go back and collect additional data. During analysis, interesting, important and relevant pieces of data were assigned codes, and the data was then broken into fragments which were clustered based on the researcher's reflection. The aim was to summarise data in common words, phrases, or patterns as this would provide a better understanding and interpretation of emerging data patterns. Data was then aggregated into a small number of themes, with five themes emerging. Identified themes were then used as major findings and these are applied as headings in the findings sections of the study (Creswell, 2014; Bowen, 2009).

The final step involved an interpretation of the findings or results. The essence was about the lessons learnt, which were based on the researcher's interpretation, or meaning derived from a comparison of the findings with information gleaned from the literature or theories. Some researchers use this section to describe how the narrative outcome will be compared with theories and the general literature on the topic. The narrative and quantitative analysis were used for this study.

### **3.9 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

According to Creswell (2014), research has to be valid and reliable. Steps which were taken to check for the accuracy and credibility of their findings formed an essential component of the research. Creswell (2014) indicated that for validity, the researcher needs to determine whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant or the readers. On the other hand, Creswell (2014) stated that qualitative researchers commonly refer to research which is credible and trustworthy when they speak of research validity and reliability. Creswell (2014) further linked the concepts validity and reliability to quantitative research as in qualitative research the researcher becomes the data gathering instrument.

#### **3.9.1 Validity**

Creswell (2014) identified the following validity strategies:

- Triangulation where the evidence is examined from the different data sources of information. A coherent justification for themes is then built on this.
- With member checking, the specific themes or final report are sent back to the participants for their inputs and opinion on the accuracy of their information.
- Usage of descriptions which are rich and thick can transport readers to the setting and they also provide an element of shared experiences.
- Self-reflection and bias clarification by the researcher help create an open and honest narrative that resonates well with the readers.
- Peer debriefing involves an interpretation which is beyond the researcher and is invested in another individual, thus enhancing the accuracy of the account.

- The entire project may be reviewed by an external auditor who is not familiar with the researcher or the project. The auditor will be in a position to provide an objective assessment throughout the research process or at the conclusion of the study.

### **3.9.2 Reliability**

Creswell (2014) stated that the following qualitative reliability procedures may be used to determine reliability:

- Proper checking of the transcripts to ensure that there are no obvious mistakes.
- Ensuring that the meaning of the codes is maintained during the process of coding and that there is not a drift in the definition of codes.
- Cross-checking of the codes which were developed by different researchers and to compare results that are derived independently.

### **3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Brink et al. (2013) put the responsibility for ensuring that the research is conducted ethically throughout all the phases, on the shoulders of the researcher. Creswell (2014) identified ethical issues as they relate to the different phases of the research process and stressed the need to guard against impropriety and misdemeanours that might reflect on the organisation. The researcher always strived to promote the integrity of the research.

Before starting with the study: the researcher's own philosophy should not be in contradiction to the code of ethics for researcher's professional association. The research site should be chosen without vested interests and all the necessary steps followed to get permission to conduct the study. The researcher was granted authority to conduct research by the Counter Intelligence section of the DOD. Further requests were made with the HR Director as well as the Senior Staff Officer HR Acquisition and permission was granted.

- Starting with the study: research should not just be done for the sake of doing research but should be of benefit to some situation or problem. The researcher

ensured that the purpose of the study was clearly indicated. The researcher further hoped that through recommendations, some improvement will be made to the HR acquisition process.

- Data collection: the researcher needs to respect the site and avoid excessive disruption. The researcher provided all the information to the participants and obtained their informed consent. Participants were not deceived nor exploited.
- Data analysing: the researcher focused on data as obtained from the participants to ensure accurate reporting. Appropriate measures were taken to ensure that personal records were carefully handled, and all information protected.
- Reporting, sharing and storing data: the researcher did not falsify any data, findings or conclusions. Information was not plagiarised and information that had potential to harm participants was not be disclosed. The researcher obtained ethical clearance for the study.

The study was done in line with Stellenbosch University research ethics policy. Permission was sought from relevant authorities in the SAMHS and thereafter ethical application was submitted to Stellenbosch University. Ethical clearance was received from the university.

### **3.11 CONCLUSION**

The focus of Chapter 3 was on the research methodology. The philosophical foundation, approach to theory development and research approach and sampling strategy were identified as well as how data for this study was collected. The researcher further provided an indication of how the data would be analysed, and the factors that were taken into consideration to ensure that this research complied with the ethical principles to ensure the protection of respondents. The focus of the next chapter is on data analysis and interpretation of results.

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the analysis of data, its interpretation and reports on both the quantitative and qualitative results. The findings are presented using tables and graphs as well as in a narrative format.

### **4.2 DATA ANALYSIS**

Quantitative data analysis was used to convert data into a numerical form to enable statistical analysis and reduce it to an interpretable form. This made it easier to study and test the relations of the research problem and to draw conclusions. Numerical data was collected from the personal files of selected candidates, analysed, and is presented mainly using tables and graphs.

Qualitative data was collected from various recruitment and selection documents and analysed to draw in-depth information on the SAMHS' processes of recruitment and selection as well as the HR systems used for recruitment and selection. Most of the documents used did not need to be transcribed; however, the documents were read critically and the text interrogated and constantly compared with other documents including relevant HR policy documents. A comparison was also made between the information obtained from records and information gained from interviews. Secondly, the analysis of qualitative data was from in-depth interviews, conducted with the aid of an audio-recorder. The researcher used unstructured interviews, described by Botma et al. (2015) as interactional events implicated in creating meanings. The participants responded to a single broad question requesting them to provide full information on the recruitment and selection process from their perspective, from the beginning to the end of the process. In-depth information was provided by the participants on the recruitment and selection process of the SAMHS and rich data was obtained from the participants' responses. The researcher only became more involved later during the interview, asking specific questions which were guided by the participants' responses, the process referred to by Botma et al. (2015) as a clue-and-cue-taking process. The researcher transcribed all the recorded information verbatim. Patterns of similar data were then identified and assigned codes according to emerging categories, based on the frequency with which some of the categories were emerging. The coded categories

which represent specific findings then formed themes representing major findings of the research (De Vos et al., 2011).

### **4.3 INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

The role of the DOD in South Africa as a developmental state has expanded to include developmental aspects, one such being employment opportunities through the MSD system. A participant described the recruitment and selection process as an annual process, with the number of candidates to take guided mainly by the Directors. The guideline is influenced by the available budget which has unfortunately been diminishing over years. A regrettable situation, as expressed by a participant, is that budgetary constraints lead to an interruption in the flow of HR acquisition processes. An example was given of the SAMHS' inability to participate in the recruitment and selection drive in 2017 and thus ended with no intake. The lack of consistency has a negative impact internally and externally. Internally, the recruitment and selection processes of the HR Acquisition section are disrupted as annually there is a set programme on acquisition activities which involve not only personnel but also various processes and procedures. The negative impact externally is based on the fact that society has expectations for employment/study opportunities and skipping a year closes up opportunities for potential candidates and their families. This adds to the unemployment statistics of the country and a negative impact on the economy. The researcher analysed various records from the selected candidates' files obtained from the SAMHS HR Acquisition section. The information in the files spanned the period from each member's acquisition and selection process to the current work information such as vacation leave forms completed. The researcher had requested files from 2015 to 2018; however, most files were from the 2015 (68%) and 2018 (28%) intake. The researcher went through 60 files, the point of departure being to identify the HR acquisition practices of the SAMHS.

The analysed data was clustered into specific categories according to the findings and aligned to the objectives as main themes under which the discussion unfolds, namely:

- A look at the SAMHS' human resource acquisition process.
- Determining whether there is a match between the acquisition of human resource and employment opportunities in the SAMHS.

- Exploring alternative HR acquisition processes that can be used to improve current processes

#### **4.3.1 A look at the SAMHS' human resource acquisition process**

##### **4.3.1.1 Recruitment**

The recruitment process aims to attract responsible and disciplined young men and women willing to serve in the SANDF (RSA, 2015b). The recruitment drive is an open process done mainly by HR and Corporate Communication departments throughout the year but the invitation for applications usually runs from January to March on an annual basis.

- Advertising and awareness campaigns

Participants indicated that the SANDF mainly use newspaper advertisements to attract suitable candidates and draw adverts according to the guidelines provided by the different directorates of the SAMHS. Different newspapers used to maximise access include The Star, The Daily Sun, and City Press. In its striving to attract the previously disadvantaged youth, the mode of advertising could disadvantage the very candidates that the department seeks to recruit due to the lack of access to resources such as newspapers. Key aspects on the advert are the closing date and specific requirements such as the admission criteria. Besides newspapers, other means of recruitment include awareness campaigns, mainly through the annual Armed Forces Day (AFD) which is hosted on a rotational basis by the different provinces, but also through shows such as the Rand Show for Gauteng Province. Some of the other provinces also have their own shows where the SANDF representatives participate and use the platform to create awareness about career opportunities within the DOD for future applications. Some of these shows take place after the closing date for applications which could cause the department to lose potential candidates.

- Determination of the number of candidates

According to the participants, the starting point of the selection process is with the requirements of the organisation as stipulated by the directors who provide the HR Acquisition section with the number of candidates to be selected for their specific mustering. Fluctuation of numbers on SAMHS' side is common due to constant changes either from the side of the director or the candidates' side. The participants



could not explain reasons for the changing numbers from the directorates' side which at times happens even after the selection process has taken place. The result, however, is that it disrupts HR acquisition processes and at times puts HR functionaries in awkward positions where they are expected to answer for the changes to the lists of selected candidates. From the candidates' side, several scenarios led to the fluctuation in numbers such as candidates who were recruited, called for selections but fail to show up. Possible reasons could be due to having found employment elsewhere, studying or loss of interest. A participant commended the DOD on the role they play in easing challenges for recruited candidates to promote their attendance of selections through the provision of transport, meals, and overnight accommodation. This goes a long way in ensuring that those successfully recruited and called up for selections can attend.

- Provincial representation

According to a participant, the HR Acquisition section ensures that all the provinces are represented and Gauteng Province, which usually has the largest population, gets the biggest share of available slots. Currently, HR Acquisition does not have written guidelines on the numbers per province and the discretion is mainly based on historical trends. The selection processes are conducted in all provinces, but the repeated usage of the same city or town could contribute to the failure to reach candidates in remote areas, resulting in a skew representation.

- Racial and gender representation

Racial and gender representation still play an important role in recruitment and selection processes. The DOD Transformation Management section has guidelines which were developed to address the imbalances of the past. A participant's concern, however, was that it is becoming more difficult to meet the set criteria even for new entrants as the intake is based on members who apply, mainly being male African. This perpetuates the race and gender imbalances which are already in existence.

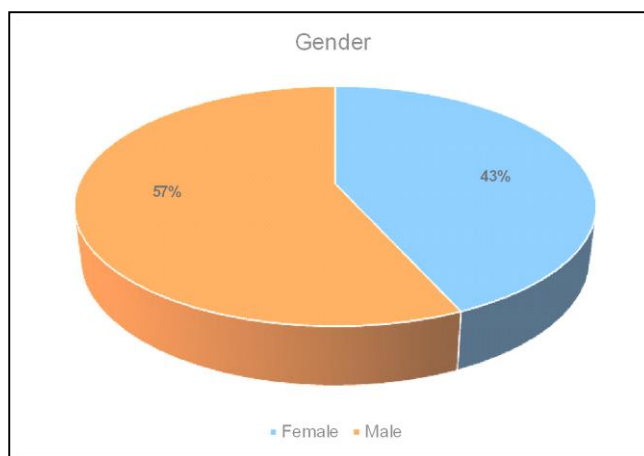
#### **4.3.1.2 Selection**

The selection process involves a range of activities inclusive of the paper selection, psychological assessment, individual interviews, health assessment and police

clearance to identify the most suitable candidates to serve in the DOD. Sixty files from the various musterings of the SAMHS were analysed.

- Gender

Out of 60 files checked there were more males than females as reflected on the graph below. The military is a male-dominated environment thus probably accounting for the depicted male/female ratio. The gap, however, is not extensive and a likely contributory factor could be the number of nursing candidates, as the nursing profession is generally female dominated. The ratio of males to females for the intake is as illustrated on the graph in Figure 4.1 below.



**Figure 4.1: Gender representation on analysed files**

- Age profile

The age of the members ranged from 19 years to 30 years. All the files had copies of the members' identity documents. The age limit for qualifying candidates throughout the DOD is 23 years for candidates with Grade 12 only and 26 years for those with tertiary qualifications. The analysis of old files accounts for the presence of age groups above the indicated age limit.

**Table 4.1: Age profile**

| Serial number | Birth year  | Age group (Years) | Total | Percentage (%) |
|---------------|-------------|-------------------|-------|----------------|
| 1             | 2000 – 1998 | 19 – 21           | 9     | 15%            |
| 2             | 1997 – 1995 | 22 – 24           | 20    | 33%            |
| 3             | 1994 – 1992 | 25 – 27           | 27    | 45%            |
| 4             | 1991 – 1989 | 28 – 30           | 4     | 7%             |

- Admission point score

South African tertiary institutions such as universities, universities of technology and colleges use the admission point score (APS) to assess their applicants' suitability for admission to study at these institutions. The scoring is based on the marks (percentage, %) as reflected on the Grade 12 statement of results. The APS is not a standardised system and the different institutions determine their own criteria in line with the qualification to be attained. The SAMHS also use the APS and the criteria differ according to the different mustering. In situations where candidates will be studying at specific universities or colleges, the criteria of those institutions will apply. All health-related courses require candidates to have done science subjects, but the weighting differs according to the field of study, e.g. higher points in mathematics for candidates earmarked for studying medicine. The SAMHS was found to be compliant as the APS in medical fields was calculated and the minimum requirements per field were correct. The only medical field that did not specify its APS was Dental Assistance. The table below reflects the medical field career options as offered by the SAMHS and the applicable academic requirements.

**Table 4.2: Entrance requirements per mustering**

| Mustering/Field    | Certificate | Compulsory subjects | Level | Minimum APS |
|--------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------|-------------|
| MBChB (Medicine)   | Grade 12    | English             | 6     | 36          |
|                    |             | Physical Science    | 6     |             |
|                    |             | Mathematics         | 6     |             |
|                    |             | Life Science        | 6     |             |
|                    |             |                     |       |             |
| Veterinary Science | Grade 12    | English             | 6     | 32          |
|                    |             | Physical Science    | 6     |             |
|                    |             | Mathematics         | 6     |             |
|                    |             | Life Science        | 6     |             |

| Mustering/Field                 | Certificate | Compulsory subjects | Level | Minimum APS |
|---------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------|-------------|
|                                 |             |                     |       |             |
| Emergency Care Technician (ECT) | Grade 12    | Physical Science    | 4     | 28          |
|                                 |             | Mathematics         | 4     |             |
|                                 |             | Life Science        | 4     |             |
|                                 |             |                     |       |             |
| Nursing                         | Grade 12    | English             | 4     | 24          |
|                                 |             | Maths/Maths Lit     | 4     |             |
|                                 |             | Life Science        | 4     |             |
|                                 |             |                     |       |             |
| Veterinary Nursing              | Grade 12    | Mathematics         | 5     | 24          |
|                                 |             | Life Science        | 5     |             |
|                                 |             |                     |       |             |
| Dental Assistant                | Grade 12    | APS not specified   |       |             |

The researcher noted with concern that the APS for candidates in non-medical musterings such as HR, Health Informatics, and Logistics was not considered as the members do not join tertiary institutions but are placed in their specific fields to start working once the basic military training has been completed. Acceptance without considering the APS could disadvantage the candidates at a later stage when they want to further their studies with tertiary institutions. Generally, the APS from the analysed files was as reflected in the table below.

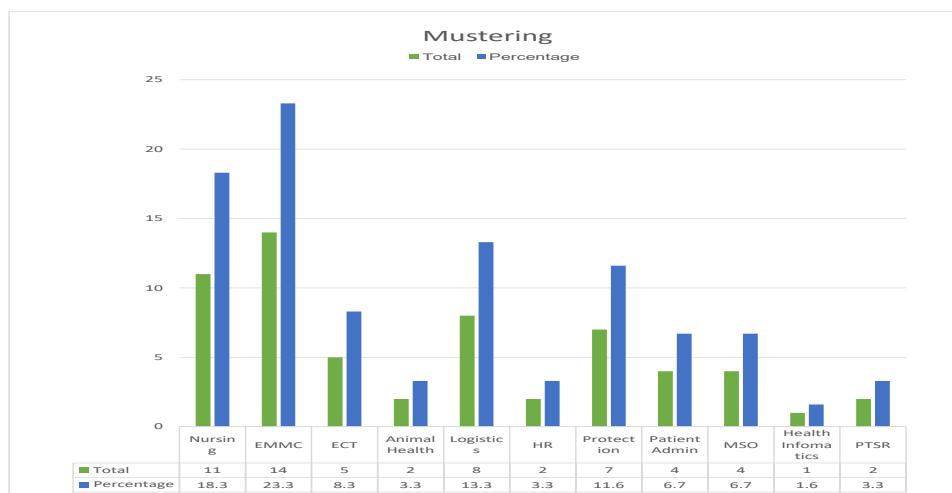
**Table 4.3: Admission point score in analysed files**

| Serial number | APS            | Total | Percentage (%) |
|---------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| 1             | 10 – 19        | 4     | 7%             |
| 2             | 20 – 29        | 13    | 21%            |
| 3             | 30 – 39        | 21    | 35%            |
| 4             | 40 – 49        | 1     | 2%             |
| 5             | Not calculated | 21    | 35%            |

- **Mustering**

The SAMHS' intake is based on available opportunities and the field of interest of candidates. According to one participants, the Directors participate in the acquisition process by providing guidelines on the criteria for admission for their specific fields, the number of candidates to take and also recommend candidates for approval by the

Surgeon General (SG). From the files perused, selections were for Nursing, Emergency Military Medical Care (EMMC), Emergency Care Technician (ECT), Animal Health, Logistics, Human Resource (HR), Protection, Patient Administration, Military Support Operations (MSO), Health Informatics and Physical Training, Sports and Recreation (PTSR). The ECT course is no longer being offered and has been replaced by EMMC, which is done over two years, and which was the most popular course chosen by candidates, at 23.3%, followed by nursing with 18.3%. The number of candidates per mustering was as reflected on the graph in Figure 4.2 below

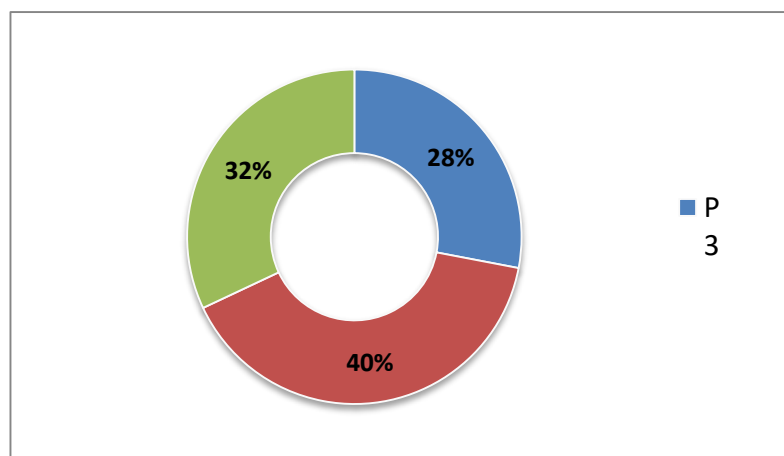


**Figure 4.2: Intake per mustering**

- Psychological assessment

A Differential Aptitude Test (DAT), which is a basic psychological test, forms part of the selection process and is undertaken by all the MSDS candidates to assess the ability to succeed in the candidate's field of choice. The test assesses verbal reasoning to determine the basic understanding of English, non-verbal assessment for the recognition of patterns, and lastly mathematics, which is done without an aid of a calculator. The minimum acceptable rating for entry is three, thus four and five represent higher performance. Puchert, Dodd and Viljoen (2017) regarded the appropriate selection of a candidate for a vacancy as one of the most critical activities which, if not done correctly, can be costly in terms of time and money. Candidates obtaining scores of four or five are regarded as having a higher aptitude and may be recommended for higher technical or mechanical fields though only in the Air Force or

the Navy. The SAMHS does not make further recommendations based on the results of the DAT and that, for the researcher, shows a gap in the SAMHS' selection process. Of the files perused, 40% of the candidates fell in the P4 category and when added to the P5 group, 72% of candidates demonstrated a higher aptitude. The researcher's view is that for the SAMHS, being predominantly health care oriented, ideal candidates should display soft skills with an inclination towards being people oriented. Doing character assessment would contribute towards getting candidates with interest in the health field and not current practice where candidates are mainly taken on the strength of their academic performance in science subjects.



**Figure 4.3: Psychological assessment**

- Selection interviews

Individual interviews play a crucial role in the selection of candidates. The interviewers need to be skilled in this task to ensure that the best candidates get selected. It is well known that some candidates are able to put forward a believable front by presenting a personality profile that will secure them a space among those selected. A participant indicated that HR Acquisition representatives attend interviews in all the provinces; however, the rest of the interview panel will be different in each province. The HR functionaries do not participate in the actual selection of candidates but they play a crucial role in attending to administrative duties from ensuring that all the necessary forms are available to ensuring that all the information is captured and documents filed accordingly for each candidate. The researcher believes that fairness in terms of selection of the candidates might be an issue due to the subjectivity imposed by the

different panel members. The usage of the same interview tool ensures that each candidate is subjected to the same exposure and thus helps minimise subjectivity; however, there is always a risk of candidates sharing information regarding questions asked. It has generally been noted that candidates interviewed at the beginning of the session perform poorer than those interviewed much later.

- Health assessment

As part of the selection process, all candidates must undergo a comprehensive health assessment which is done to determine their health status. Of the files checked, all the candidates' medical assessments were recorded to be 100% G1K1, reflecting that all were medically fit for service in the SAMHS and the SANDF. The allegation that some SANDF members offer payment to health care practitioners (HCPs) to get a G1K1 status in order to secure deployment opportunities has been flagged as a serious concern and points to gaps in the capturing or processing of medical results. With the current unemployment situation and the youth desperate to secure jobs, one can only hope that the practice is not widespread to the extent where selected candidates pay HCPs to get a clean bill of health too. Confidence in having a fit and healthy soldier is harnessed through a G1K1 status.

- Police clearance

The high levels of corruption, with those in public service also incriminated, calls for stringent measures when selecting future HCPs. Fingerprints of all potential candidates get taken by the Military Police (MPs) to determine whether they do not have criminal charges registered against their names. The fingerprints are taken on the selection day but analysed at a later stage and results sent to HR Acquisition. Only candidates with no criminal record get called up. Of the personal files analysed, none of the candidates had a criminal record.

- Biographical data

Biographical data plays a crucial role for all individuals as it helps to differentiate one individual from another. This critical information is kept by the HR section throughout one's working life and individuals need to take the responsibility of ensuring that the information remains correct. A participant highlighted the constant changing of cellular phone numbers as a challenge and particularly so as in most cases the members fail

to update such details at their respective HR offices. All the files (100%) had the candidates' biographical details which include their names, age, copies of their identification, gender, addresses, contact details, next of kin, bank details and certificates of qualifications, where applicable.

#### ***4.3.1.3 Data capturing and record keeping***

The current SAMHS HR acquisition processes, especially on-site, where selections are taking place, are mostly paper based with the data being captured electronically after the selection process, and mainly involving processes such as the compilation of name lists. Akinloye, Adu and Ojo (2017) described record keeping and management as crucial, vital and indispensable in the smooth running and success of any system and further asserted that record management, if executed effectively and efficiently, can be a cost saving measure and will endorse the principles of transparency, accessibility and accountability.

- The management of data and records

A participant highlighted the need for the SAMHS to improve the data capturing system to prevent challenges of incorrect information, missing files or manipulation of HR documents. The management of data and records during SAMHS' selections become very important as different professionals play different roles and it is ultimately the conversion of their opinions, observations and judgement that will determine the suitability of each candidate. This approach may, to some extent, compromise the objectivity expected of each professional but De Mingo and Martinez (2018) provided a possible solution to counter this challenge indicating that proper capturing and preservation of information allows for the tracing of the information back to the original source and the monitoring of various transactions undertaken – thus making it possible to trace unauthorised access, possible manipulation or the deletion of information through the use of the records management system. A different dimension was brought in by Cook (2007) who focused on ethical issues pertaining to the handling of records by the different users and the interfaces between them as creators of records, users and data subjects which may lead to tensions and may necessitate ethical decisions, a statement that the researcher strongly identifies with, based on the challenges experienced when requesting for the retrieval of HR records.



The handling of records by many individuals opens the system up to the possibility of corruption. According to De Mingo and Martinez (2018), transparency minimises corruption indirectly as it fosters good governance and administration. The authors continued to share some of the measures involving the management of records that were introduced in Spain to tackle corruption, described as Spain's second-most important challenge behind unemployment. One of their best practices to minimise corruption focuses on legislation on transparency obligations into a record's lifecycle, thus minimising the problem of missing documents, alteration of information or lack of evidence (De Mingo and Martinez, 2018). This viewpoint is shared by Joseph, Debowski and Goldschmidt (2012) who reiterated the opinion that records are the most reliable and legally verifiable source of data and can therefore be used as evidence of decisions, actions and transactions taken by organisations. De Mingo and Martinez (2018) drew a link between poor management of records and incidents of corruption and identified efficient management of records as the basis for transparency in public administration.

- Preservation of records

Tagbator, Adzido and Agbanu (2015) highlighted the importance of permanent preservation of records which they regard as crucial for the below-mentioned reasons:

- Administrative value

*Organizations and individuals could consult records to obtain background information, identify a precedent or to substantiate or refute an allegation* (Tagbator et al., 2015).

The administrative value of records should never be underestimated. The cumbersome process of document retrieval and the history of files that go missing dent the SAMHS' credibility in the management of records. An efficient document management system will enable the SAMHS to justify their acceptance of specific candidates as information on the set criteria and the performance of each candidate will be readily available on their personal files. According to Tagbator et al. (2015), records promote the reputation and credibility of an organisation by providing accountability for actions.

- Financial value

*Records in an organization provide evidence of funds obtained, the allocation, control and how they were expended* (Tagbator et al., 2015). The provision of transport, meals and accommodation for candidates coming for selections has financial implications. The information is however not kept in each candidate's file, but it is with the administrative records of the HR section. The records are accessible should there be need for financial accounting.

- Legal value

*Among the many legal uses, records provide evidence of agreements, contractual obligations and privileges as agreed upon by different parties* (Tagbator et al., 2015). Litigations for workplace processes and procedures are on the rise and the SAMHS is not an exception to this. Candidates not accepted could easily express their dissatisfaction through legal routes. The researcher's perusal of some of the files reflected gaps – in some areas, information was available but not processed such as with the APS, where the Grade 12 results (marks) were available but the APS was not calculated. In other areas, the information was completely not available such as the “assessment of character” forms missing. This exposes the SAMHS and will make it very difficult for them to avoid the cost of litigation should there be a legal case against the department.

- Information value

*Records are often recognized as the primary source of information and research* (Tagbator et al., 2015). This is true as evidenced by this research where most of the information was obtained from documents. If complete and accurate records are kept, it becomes easy to follow the course of events, such as the whole process of selections, where one can trace back what happened, when and how. The researcher experienced several challenges when trying to access HR records despite the fact that permission was granted. Challenges included referral from one person to the next, the storage of files in one place whereas the people with keys were in a different location and citing the challenge of unavailability of transport as well as the struggle to get the files from certain dates as specified by the researcher. There was also a lot of role confusion with contradicting views on what the researcher actually needed to do to

access files as HR functionaries were shifting responsibilities. The SAMHS HR system thus has lots of technical issues that need to be improved and the cumbersome processes point to inefficiency and systems which do not promote cost containment and proper preservation of information. Records help to preserve the intellectual property of the organisation and ensure continuity through the preservation of information (Tagbator et al., 2015).

The researcher's experience regarding completeness of information from the records is that most of the information was available though some information was missing in some files. On the arrangement of information within the files the sequence of records was found to be haphazard. Most of the recruitment and selection documents were available within individual files; however, not arranged in a specific sequence making it difficult for anyone to peruse and to navigate the files with ease. Joseph et al. (2012) asserted that organisations are increasingly acknowledging the importance of records management. This acknowledgement and improvement of records management within the SAMHS would go a long way in improving service delivery.

#### **4.3.1.4 Analysis of policy directives**

Policy directives are supposed to guide processes and procedures. The researcher's interaction with front-line HR functionaries revealed many gaps. Anecdotal evidence suggests that HR front-line functionaries mainly base their activities on historical trends, information being passed from their predecessors. Practice is mainly based on *this is how it has always been done*; with very little consultation of policies/policy directives to back-up information or practice. The struggle to get hold of HR Acquisition policies for this analysis endorsed the researcher's assertion that HR functionaries generally do not consult available policies in the execution of their activities as some were not even aware of some of the policies or policy directives that the researcher was looking for.

From the policy directives discussed in Chapter 2, the researcher identified three key documents that were deemed to have a direct bearing on the SAMHS' recruitment and selection process for a detailed analysis. For each of the three documents a brief background on what the document is all about is provided followed by an analysis

based on three factors, namely availability and accessibility: relevance and purpose; and policy implementation. The following are the three documents:

- Revised Instruction: Military Skills Development System (DOD, 2005).
- Department of Defence Instruction (DODI) 00080 – Policy Directive on Inherent Rank-Age Requirements for the SANDF (DOD, 2002).
- Department of Defence Human Resource Strategy (DOD, 2010).
- Revised instruction: Military Skills Development System (2019).

This instruction replaced six repealed instructions which include the 2002 MSDS Implementation Instruction and the 2005 Revised Implementation Instruction for the MSDS. The instruction resides within the broader framework of the White Paper on Defence and the Defence Review, both which support the notion of the SANDF having an adequate and affordable defence capability through a One Force concept consisting of a relatively small Regular Force and a sufficiently large Reserve Force. The envisaged force structure would mainly consist of young and fit personnel to fulfil operational requirements and would be sustained through the rejuvenation process, mainly the MSD system. Analysis of the current situation, however, reflects non-alignment between this envisaged force structure and the planned strategy as reflected in the HR Strategy (DOD, 2010). One key strategy for maintaining adequate levels of reserves as the bulk of deployable personnel is to ensure adequate sourcing levels, through a thorough recruitment and selection process of young and fit members, whilst empowering the SANDF members for future careers in civil society.

- Availability and accessibility. On determining the availability and accessibility of documents, some HR policies and directives, including this one, were not readily available and it was a struggle for the researcher to get hold of them. The likelihood is that such documents are equally not readily accessible to personnel thus defeating the purpose of having guidelines as those who are supposed to implement are not given essential tools to do so. Poor policy distribution counters the very essence of having a policy. The regularity of reviewing policies was also determined and though there is currently a revised instruction of 2019, regular policy review over the years did not take place.

- Relevance and purpose. The relevance of content and purpose were considered, and the researcher found that the policy remains relevant and that it aims to change behaviour and to improve performance. If well implemented, this policy would bring about improvements in the management of human resources in the SANDF. This MSDS guideline advocates for force rejuvenation with the recruitment and selection done to attract the best young men and women. The researcher's interpretation is that the policy was meant to bring about change, but that the very change would likely unsettle many SANDF employees as, in its mechanism of force rejuvenation, it sought to move older members and skill them for work outside the DOD. The intention of the policy was thus positive and very applicable to the situation then as well as currently. The current situation, however, does not align this envisaged force structure to the planned strategy. The sourcing of young, fit, deployable personnel is happening but the empowerment of senior SANDF members for future careers in civil society, in order to assist making way for young members to get into posts is generally not taking place. SANDF members are afforded an opportunity for re-skilling, but this is only for a period of three months, around a member's retirement.
- Implementation. The researcher's analysis generally reflects poor policy implementation. The inequality gaps within the South African landscape demand drastic measures to address challenges and the failure to implement policies only magnifies the problems. According to the researcher, processes for policy implementation are not well structured and the chances of improved performance are slim. Guidelines should provide information on objectives that should be pursued and how to do so. Analysis further revealed that policies are easily adopted but often not implemented as envisioned and as such fail to achieve the intended results. Emphasis is often put on outputs and outcomes while neglecting the process of policy implementation, which requires multi-stakeholder synergy including government, private sector and communities to improve the lives of citizens within the reality of limited funds and human resources.

The MSDS as the primary HR supply for the Regular and Reserve Forces provides an initial career pathway for school-leavers and those who have just obtained a tertiary

qualification. An analysis of its design, which is based on the *tenets* mentioned below follows:

- ✓ *Effective, efficient and economical service delivery by Regular Force members.*  
This outlook is tainted by the reality of poor service delivery in the SANDF, including the SAMHS. A participant reflected on how HR processes, such as the personnel acquisition process, are not always executed as they should be due to factors from the side of the directors, the HR functionaries and even from the candidates' side, resulting in more workload for HR personnel or delayed and inefficient service delivery. The low morale, as explained later, adds to poor service delivery which in turn has an influence on the economic outlook.
- ✓ *The system being voluntary but providing a strong incentive for serving in the Reserves.* Voluntary systems call for stringent admission criteria to ensure the department gets what it needs. Although the system is voluntary, the real reasons for some of the members wanting to serve in the SANDF are questionable. Statistics reflect that unemployment levels in the RSA, especially among the youth, are rising despite repeated promises by government to create jobs and a better life for its citizens. The MSDS, meant partly as a poverty alleviation strategy, attracts massive numbers of candidates eager to improve their lives and those of their families. One participant described the MSDS as a survival opportunity for the recruits, some with no commitment to fulfilling the mandate of the SANDF. Reports of crimes committed with military precision have been associated with the inability of the SANDF to absorb all the MSDS members upon the expiry of their contracts after a period of two years. Being unemployed, especially after being used to getting a salary for two years and exposure to combat training, makes the members susceptible to recruitment for criminal activities and effectively cancels the incentive for serving in the Reserves.
- ✓ *Sustainment of the Reserves whilst ensuring representivity and addressing the problem of ageing Reserve Force members, especially the leader group.* The need to address the issue of representivity, especially among the leader group cannot be overemphasised. Although the SANDF has historically been male dominated with most senior posts occupied by White males, measures have been taken to correct the situation but more still needs to be done. The need to address the discrepancies of the past called for the fast-tracking of careers for

some members, but the pace of change continues to be slow and the process not always regarded as fair and consistent, leading to frustration, low morale and grievances on both sides. If HR processes were aligned to policies, most activities, including recruitment and selection, would be guided by verifiable data. In the case of recruitment and selection, statistics would dictate the number of vacant posts, and thus the number and qualities needed per mustering. This would help bridge the current gap with representivity. The ageing workforce and issue of representivity thus remain the reality that the department is still grappling with.

- ✓ *A higher and rapid throughput in the Regulars to maintain youthful, healthy and fit Regular Force members.* This ideal is jeopardised by the inconsistent application of policies and corrupt activities by some members which result in unfair practices where eligible members get overlooked for course nominations and promotion opportunities. The expected move of personnel thus gets hampered and the ripple effect is seen with the failure to create the needed number of posts for taking in new members. Recruitment drives thus become fruitless exercises and are not seen as sincere because efforts made to attract people and the turnout at recruitment sites do not match the number ultimately taken, especially for the SAMHS. The lack of policy implementation guidelines and processes leads to bottlenecks in the system with certain members being stuck on certain rank levels for extremely long periods. This is further worsened by the failure to maintain healthy lifestyles such as healthy diets, regular exercising and effective stress management which compromise the health status of Regular Force members and limit their transferability.
- ✓ *A career option that is regarded as worthwhile, but not life-long to maintain the required force levels, mainly in specialised musterings.* The SANDF and the SAMHS in particular has potential to provide its members with worthwhile career opportunities through remunerative benefits and opportunities for personal and professional development. However, the inefficient policy implementation, especially HR-related issues on rank levels, promotions, course nominations and salaries, is a source of frustration for many members, leading to the lodging of grievances and some members opting for termination of their service.
- ✓ *Top leadership positions occupied by a relatively senior group of selected professionals must not be more than 20%.* The bloated South African public



service, the reluctance of senior members to go on pension and the practice of skilled members going on pension but coming back as consultants are all known to be serious points of contention for the government. These challenges affect the SANDF as well and they render the ideal less than 20% ineffective. If there is no movement at the top, then there will be no movement on lower structures, thus minimising opportunities for new entrants.

The SAMHS recruitment and selection process resides under the broader framework of Director HR Acquisitions (D HR Acq), responsible for spearheading the centralised recruitment process. Perusal of the research files reflected adherence to the basic intake requirements/criteria such as recruiting volunteers in the open labour market, citizenship, age requirements and medical profile. The process for determining targets however seemed flawed as services which had to indicate recruitment targets at times changed the number of candidates they needed. The targets are supposed to be based on operational requirements, the services' capacity to train and affordability within the HR budget. In the SAMHS there have been instances where there was no intake of MSDS candidates in a particular year.

According to the Revised Instruction: MSDS (DOD, 2005) the MSDS recruitment strategy is developed by D HR Acq, Reserve Force Division and HR planners from Services and Divisions and it should strive for a decentralised and cost-effective recruitment drive. The research participant indicated that previously the recruitment and selection process was centralised, with the Acquisition Directorate team conducting the process throughout the country and that the practice was stopped and the provinces involved more involved in the process as a cost-cutting measure. In the SAMHS, the administration remains with the HR Acq department thus making it easier to collate all the information and to improve the efficiency of the system.

- **Department of Defence Instruction (DODI) 00080 – Policy Directive on Inherent Rank-Age Requirements for the SANDF (DOD, 2002)**

This Policy Directive on Inherent Rank-Age Requirements (DOD, 2002) aims to facilitate the DOD's rejuvenation strategy in accordance with the HR Strategy (DOD, 2010). The aim thus forms the essence of the formulation of this policy directive which has a direct bearing on the recruitment and selection process. The recruitment of



young and fit soldiers should ensure congruence between the Department's mandate which is the defence of the country and its macro HR management plan. International rank-age practice provides the necessary platform for benchmarking and thus the identification of shortfalls. Though the Policy Directive on Inherent Rank-Age Requirements (DOD, 2002) should pave way for the implementation process, the overall analysis reflects its inability to operationalise the strategy. The Policy Directive highlights the inefficiency of the current service system as it has not catered for the envisaged rejuvenation, resulting in stagnation and many SANDF members exceeding the criteria for reasonable rank-age utilisation thus not being fit for effective operational utilisation. This policy has a direct bearing on the SANDF's acquisition process. Defence Forces should have a strategy on what their ideal rank-age structure is and how the members' career path is structured. This enables fairness in the eyes of the members, but it would also minimise grievances by members as well as litigations arising from perceived unfair labour practices. This would also directly inform the department's staffing norms, including the determination of the intake.

- Availability and accessibility. On analysing the availability, accessibility and revision of the policy, the Policy Directive on Inherent Rank-Age Requirements (DOD, 2002) document was readily available as the researcher did not struggle to get hold of the DODI; however, there was no evidence of regular updating of the document. Policies are developed from a need and needs change with time as situations change. The failure to revise and update policies implies that old guidelines are used to deal with current problems, resulting in obsolete procedures and processes. Policies should be revised and updated on a regular basis.
- Content and relevance. On analysing the content and relevance of this policy directive, the researcher found the content to be relevant with the purpose of performance improvement, which if it could be implemented would bring about significant change for the better. If this DODI could be applied as intended, it would attain its purpose of performance improvement. The DODI would lead to good reforms as the department would end up having members with career progression aligned to the expected rank progression, thus increasing the likelihood of keeping serving members productive and motivated.

A number of members in the core service continue serving and attending promotional courses to improve their chances for career progression, as supported by anecdotal evidence. Over time, the extended period of some members in a specific rank reduces the ease of upward mobility for the younger, upcoming members and at the same time demoralises those who have been holding that specific rank for a long period. This service ethos is in contrast to international practice characterised by an efficient, effective and economic execution of the corporate mission by uniformed members. The identification of general measures contributing to poor policy implementation could help bridge this gap.

- Implementation. Analysis of the Policy Directive on Inherent Rank-Age Requirements (DOD, 2002) reflects implementation gaps as discussed below:
- ✓ The implementation process is marred with discrepancies between what the policy addresses and practice.
- ✓ International best practice reflects great consideration for entry level requirements and processes, ensuring that the force remains professionalised and due consideration being given to the academic background. This is in contrast to the South African situation where, as part of the developmental strategy, the main focus is on the upliftment of social conditions, with specific focus on the previously disadvantaged. The sentiment means well and contributes towards the envisaged end state of the country; however, it defeats the envisaged ideal of professionalising the DOD, right from the point of entry.
- ✓ The main focus is on the entry-level requirements, taking into consideration the fact that the department does offer opportunities for further studies, but in the process other important attributes for getting best candidates get side-lined.

The SAMHS' recruitment and selection process are very specific for health-related fields and all the entry related requirements (criteria for selection) are clearly spelt out. As indicated previously, the admission point score (APS) plays a significant role, focusing on academic performance and mainly science subjects. The intake is meant to groom future professionals and over years this was evidenced by the arrangement to have members doing Officers' Formative course immediately after finishing their basic military training, whereas those going on to general fields join the work force immediately after basic training. Perusal of these members' files reflects that for basic

entry level requirements for musterings such as HR, logistics and patient administration, the APS is not taken into consideration. This constitutes a disjuncture between the policy directive and its implementation. It is essential to take into consideration that outside the DOD, scholars go to tertiary institutions immediately after Grade 12 to pursue degrees and diplomas in the indicated fields.

According to the Policy Directive on Inherent Rank-Age Requirements (DOD, 2002), the macro-HR management plan is meant to address a career design which supports a flexible and developmentally focused way of serving and counters stagnation. The researcher's view is that failure to have implementation guidelines encourages non-performance. If there was an indication that after a specific number of years individuals would be expected to meet some set criteria to enable progression onto the next rank, this would empower career managers to be more efficient in this role. It would also assist the member in participating in their own career progression. Currently the motivation for growth is driven by the attendance of promotional courses which is often sufficient for career progression, especially for non-professional musterings. The other key determinant of career progression is the number of years in a specific rank though inconsistencies in application are perceived as favouritism and lead to grievances. The increasing age of the SANDF's deployable personnel hampers force preparation, force employment and force sustainment. The absence of policies on maximum tenure in specific ranks for middle and senior ranks creates conditions for stagnation.

The document highlights the following aspects:

- ✓ Constitutional imperatives. The DOD recognises the constitutional imperative of not discriminating unfairly on the grounds of age, amongst other aspects, and thus adopted the usage of the principle of inherent job requirements to justify the need for 'fair' age discrimination based on the need to satisfy the mission requirements of maintaining professionalism. The mandate of the DOD warrants the intake of young and fit members and the researcher is of the opinion that this factor can be justified from that angle.
- ✓ Age profile. Young fit soldiers with limited social responsibilities are able to adapt to a constantly changing environment and to withstand physical and psychological stresses. This profile is age-related, but the inherent requirements

of jobs will include other traits such as knowledge, skills and abilities. The changing psycho-social circumstances warrant the need to review perceptions about social norms. Whereas it was a norm that young soldiers would not have social responsibilities, the current social circumstances have seen a rapid increase in social ills such as child-headed families. This puts immense pressure on individuals with this background to secure employment but also makes it difficult for such members to withstand stressful environments. Backgrounds like child-headed families are unlikely to surface during the selection process as most candidates would put forward a front which projects an ideal picture. Skilled interviewing might help bring the candidates' realities to the fore.

- ✓ Physical fitness. Fitness level is linked to age and is crucial as members might operate under extreme geographic conditions. The main determinant of the level of fitness during the selection process is the health assessment. It is the researcher's assertion that one's age might not be an accurate indicator of the individual's level of physical fitness and more measures as fitness determinants need to be considered.
- ✓ Technology. This force multiplier increases the deterrence value of the DOD. Younger people are able to keep abreast of technological developments; however, the extent of exposure to technology may be a determinant of whether a candidate gets selected or not. It is essential to consider mechanisms of levelling the playing field during selections to ensure that candidates from disadvantaged backgrounds do not become unfairly disadvantaged.
- ✓ Discipline. Discipline is essential to ensure the execution of the government's military policies and enables participation in the democratic processes of the country. Discipline is one of the components difficult to assess during the selection process. Candidates put on their best behaviour to maximise chances of being selected and it is common for them to portray a front that they want the selection panel to see. Candidates being recruited are at a sensitive age where identity plays a crucial role and they need affirmation from others. This makes them vulnerable to associating with wrong crowds which can have a negative impact on the career that they are trying to establish.
- ✓ Career possibilities. The Policy Directive on Inherent Rank-Age Requirements (2002) regards the military rank structure as restrictive for progression towards more senior levels. As outlined in the literature review, job hunting is not just

about what the potential employee brings to the table. Candidates are entitled to know about prospects for growth and development within their fields/careers of choice. If during selection interviews a picture is created of potential for a fulfilling career and this fails to materialise, it leads to disillusionment with potential to break the morale of a member who had been performing well.

Efforts are taken by the SANDF to reach young people in deep rural areas although the vastness of areas to be covered makes the task extremely difficult. These members get disadvantaged by other factors as well. The unfamiliarity or lack of exposure puts these members at a disadvantage when doing psychological testing. Some members fail to make the cut, not due to low intellect, but due to the lack of exposure. The selection approach of “one size fits all” where everyone is exposed to an exact type of testing (a candidate from a private school, a model C school or a make-shift school in some deep rural area), cannot be regarded as fair. The stark contrast of the different environments holds back the most disadvantaged, who are likely to be committed to grabbing any opportunity, determined to make a success of it.

- **Department of Defence Human Resource Strategy (2010)**

The aim of the DOD HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) is to ensure the establishment of the most effective, efficient and economic Defence HR composition, of the right quantity and quality in the right places at the right times (DOD, 2010). The document analyses the HR situation within the DOD and provides a macro HR strategic direction in order to guide the DOD in the execution of its mission. This document highlights areas of concern, identifies measures essential to improve the situation and warns of the risks of failing to adhere to the strategy. The researcher’s analysis focused on areas applicable for HR acquisition processes.

- Availability and accessibility. On availability and accessibility, the DOD HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) document was readily available and there was no struggle in obtaining the document.
- Content and relevance. According to the HR Strategy (DOD, 2010), the strategy was informed by studying international best practice of defence HR management models, such as that of Germany and the United Kingdom. It was based upon a

practical analysis of the DOD HR context and realities to help provide strategic direction based upon appropriate solutions for the unique DOD environment, to guide HR management. The strategy is thus very relevant, bringing issues which continue to plague the DOD to the fore but of importance is that it also highlights strategies for mitigation.

- Implementation. When analysing the extent to which HR processes, specifically those that have an impact on acquisition processes, are of a quality commensurate with DOD's needs, HR processes fall far behind as evidenced by gaps identified within the processes. HR processes are not aligned to available HR policies with the greatest gap being more pronounced in the implementation of the policies. The below-mentioned issues are addressed in the strategy:

- **Strategic direction**

On the mandate of the DOD, the HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) highlights the dilemma brought about by the dichotomy facing defence planners, that in the absence of external aggression, secondary functions of the SANDF become primary functions, both in need of limited resources. The differing viewpoints on whether to prioritise primary functions and channel resources to maintain the capability to execute this function or towards executing secondary commitments compromise both, with a resultant decline in output for both areas. The dilemma influences the acquisition process as functions need to inform the type of candidate sought by the department. An approach of indecisiveness creates hesitation about the extent of the recruitment drive and during the selection process about the qualities and quantities needed.

- **DOD macro human resource perspective**

The HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) states that the regular component of defence forces uses different service systems which generally make provision for the following:

- *Young and fit members forming a bulk of the composition for operational or deployment needs with a rapid personnel turnover to sustain continuous rejuvenation. These form the main composition of short-term service (STS).*

- *Professional military personnel as a smaller core component for the rendering of management, training and administrative functions as middle-ranking personnel forming part of medium-term service (MTS).*
- *Top leadership and management forming a very small HR component in the SANDF's command and management cadre as part of long-term service (LTS).*

The composition's intent is to enable the Defence Force to respond in an affordable but flexible manner to various threats and not have the burden of maintaining a large and costly permanent force. The document estimates the peacetime human resource ratio to be 40% STS, 40% MTS and 20% LTS. The HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) assigns the reason for the SANDF's failure to curtail personnel expenditure on its macro-composition. The "One Force Model" proposal which entails the SANDF being an all-volunteer force with a relatively small Regular Force backed up by a sufficiently large Reserve Force was grounded on political, economic and strategic reasons but it has failed to materialise. The utility of both components thus remains vague making it difficult to allocate funds appropriately (DOD, 2010). Failure to quantify the composition makes HR processes difficult as it implies that the mechanisms that are meant to inform HR on personnel are dysfunctional. It thus becomes difficult to have a focused recruitment drive. The uncertainty makes the execution of some HR management functions such as acquisition, career and succession planning even more difficult, making it almost impossible for the department to attain a steady state.

According to the HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) document, the envisaged flexibility and saving on personnel expenditure have not materialised as service has merely become a life-long career prospect for many Regular Force (RegF) personnel. This situation unfortunately clogs the system thus failing to make way for new entrants. The situation is exacerbated by the failure to have attractive complementary systems in highly specialised musterings to attract and retain scarce expertise. The high turnover of health care practitioners bears evidence to this. The lack of integrated planning leads to the inability to optimise the utilisation of the Reserve Force (ResF), which remains under-funded and cannot assume its role fully. There are also differing views on whether the Reserve Force is a wartime reserve or an integral part of the force design of the SANDF (DOD, 2010). This warrants an urgent strategic decision which if not taken will lead to degeneration and loss of a viable component of the SANDF.



Downscaling of the Reg-F can only take place after the redeployment and reemployment mechanisms have been undertaken and the 40% target for personnel expenditure has not materialised. According to Business Insider SA (2020), over the past 12 years the salaries of civil servants have seen growth by around 40% but of concern is the further reporting that there was no equivalent increase in civil servants' level of productivity. All this on the backdrop of continuing budget cuts which for the DOD was 0.2% (Business Insider SA, 2020). The standpoint on the ResF has to inform the acquisition process as it impacts on the number of the intake and qualities needed. The ripple effect of indecisions about the primary role of the ResF puts the SAMHS as a support service in a difficult position when it comes to student numbers. The indecision also inhibits a more aggressive approach to the marketing and recruitment drives.

- Education, training and development

South Africa is among the highest rated countries with massive unemployment. The labour market is flooded with desperate jobseekers and the DOD competes against the many other potential employers for the performers with potential to meet the employment profile in specialised occupations. The unfortunate reality is that very few DOD applicants will have science subjects which are deemed essential for technical and professional fields. It is necessary to minimise the department's investment risk regarding specialised training which is extremely expensive by facilitating ETD during the pre-employment phase to bring school leavers on par with the needed educational standards to improve success for appointment in such musterings or occupational classes. The DOD, as cited in the HR Strategy (DOD, 2010), has not yet attained the position where personnel's learning pathways are structured and developed *in tandem* with their career pathways. This results in inefficiency and contributes to low morale. ETD will contribute towards the matching of capabilities to essential skills needed to fulfil the department's mandate. The skills gap has to be informed by a skills audit which should be done annually to assist in aligning human resource needs to employment opportunities in the SAMHS.



- Representivity

The HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) acknowledges attempts to address the injustices of the past which led to the establishment of representivity ratio at workplaces, especially race and gender. The document further acknowledges strides made within the DOD to address representivity issues but identified the following three areas as lagging behind:

- Specialised musterings (fields). The racial representivity of 64.4% African, 24.3% White, 10.2% Coloured and 0.75% Indian, has not been attained in specialised musterings such as pilots, naval combat officers and health professionals. Part of the challenge of recruiting enough Blacks emanates from the school dispensation legacy where the choice of mathematics and science as school subjects was not given much attention and there was little emphasis on following technical careers. The MSD system needs to be shaped in a way that will help address the shortfall by use of innovative strategies from recruitment to provision of support to selected candidates.
- Middle management. Middle management also has many imbalances regarding race and gender representations. The SAMHS has made strides in bridging the ratio gap for middle managers.
- Entry level. In contrast to the challenge cited with middle management, on the other end where employment takes place, a largely African composition emerges.

These situations need to be rectified and resources have to be availed to rectify any skewness of the HR composition at any level. HR processes to affirm designated persons could contribute towards normalising the situation. Focused advertising campaigns, coaching, mentoring, fast tracking, head hunting or talent scouting are innovative strategies that can be used to address the imbalances.

- The DOD human resource philosophy

According to the HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) the DOD wants its HR composition to be competently managed in the interests of both the organisation and the individual. It further acknowledges the need for individual empowerment through education,

training and development, ranging from pre-employment ETD to post-employment reskilling and reintegration into civilian society. It is recognised that current and future defence demands will increasingly call for a workforce which is predominantly technology orientated. This calls for youth academic development to fulfil its own recruiting needs, at the same time also employing all reasonable means to retain scarce expertise, fully cognisant of the fact that scarce expertise is a prerequisite to maintain a technologically advanced defence force. Once lost, scarce expertise is very difficult to reacquire and takes a long time to reintegrate into the organisation, thereby presenting a strategic risk.

The general analysis made on the SAMHS' human resource acquisition process reflects that the SAMHS' HR acquisition section generally follows procedural processes linked to recruitment and selection; however, there are massive gaps identified especially with systemic issues that are supposed to be grounded on policies. The researcher identified the failure to implement policies as the main contributory factor to HR woes in the SAMHS and the reason many processes are not taking place. The failure to bridge the identified gaps lies mostly at the level of the HR management but the researcher asserts that for HR functionaries, basic qualities such as diligence, critical thinking, attention to detail and putting people first, would go a long way in improving the quality of HR section service delivery with the potential to drastically improving the level of satisfaction with service rendered among SAMHS personnel.

#### **4.3.2 Determining whether there is a match between the acquisition of human resource and employment opportunities in the SAMHS**

An efficiently managed HR section is likely to contribute positively towards goal attainment for the organisation. Diligence in processes such as recruitment and selection will ensure that the sourcing of its most valuable resource, its employee, is aligned to match skills required by the organisation. The researcher analysed the recruitment and selection processes, as well as policy directives to determine the SAMHS ability to match personnel acquisition to available employment opportunities.

#### **4.3.2.1 Recruitment**

- Aligning the intake to available posts

The process of aligning the intake of new candidates in the SAMHS to the available employment opportunities starts with the recruitment process. HR acquisition gets guidelines from the Directors on the number of candidates per directorate to take. One participant however, indicated that although a skills audit is an HR requirement, it does not seem as if a skills gap is used to inform the number of vacant posts to be filled. The movement of personnel such as transfers, retirements, or resignations also informs recruitment patterns. A determination of the number of candidates needed per mustering should thus be an informed decision, based on an analysis of organisational needs and should in turn direct essential qualities that candidates should possess. This unfortunately does not seem to be the approach in the SAMHS. The participants' opinions and the researcher's perusal of personal records suggest that the recruitment process is a completely open process, based on one's Grade 12 certificate. The disadvantage of this approach is the increased likelihood of attracting wrong candidates to the SANDF and if selected, placing them in musterings that they do not have interest in or qualities for.

- Provincial representation

The DOD, as a national department, recruits candidates from the whole of South Africa, and it is essential to have clear guidelines in place on the number of candidates per province in order to dispel the perception by stakeholders of preference for certain provinces over other. Although the SAMHS recruits nationally as well, the majority of files were of members from Gauteng Province. When asked on the inclination of particular provinces towards certain career choices, the participants could not make any differentiation according to province. The researcher, however, cannot eliminate the possibility of the popularity of certain careers in some provinces, such as the likelihood that members from urban areas are likely to choose technologically-based careers. This could not be established from the files.

#### **4.3.2.2 Selection**

- Choice of mustering

Available career opportunities in the SAMHS are guided not only by the numbers requested by Directors, but by the number that can be taken by the different training institutions. Participants shared the same opinion that fields such as medicine were popular among those with good Grade 12 results, and that they often have more members than what they can take. The SAMHS application form does warn candidates that placement in one's chosen field of study is not guaranteed and that for acceptance, candidates will be subject to further selection criteria. The study opportunities available are reflected on the application form but the recruits have to indicate only one career choice. The researcher contends that the practice restricts placement opportunities because if there is no space in the chosen field then HR functionaries managing the process will have no way of knowing what the candidate's second choice could have been. One research participant highlighted the fact that whilst busy with the Basic Military course, the Directors visit the recruits to confirm their selection lists. This is the period that members get moved around because if a Director is done selecting then the remaining members need to be slotted in other musterings. For careers such as nursing and EMMC, larger numbers can be taken since the training is done within the SAMHS, nursing being done at the Nursing College and EMMC at the School for Military Health Training (SMHT) both situated at the Military Health Training Formation (MHTF). The ability to take bigger numbers results in some students who could not be accommodated in some fields taking Nursing or EMMC as careers to fall back on, thus creating a mismatch between the career that the member is passionate about and the one the member is placed in.

- Admission point score

An APS plays a crucial role in the selection of candidates and in securing a career of choice for the recruits. Most of the SAMHS' career opportunities within the medical field specify academic requirements, which mainly include science subjects and the determination of the APS. The candidates choose their preferred field of study when applying; however, the score obtained directs whether candidates make a cut for their fields of choice. A candidate's academic performance thus has the potential to channel the member to a field that was never the member's choice but that is taken because it

is what the member qualifies for, based on the APS. The SAMHS' selection process can thus cause a mismatch between the profession that the candidate wanted to follow and available career opportunities, though on this point the skewness is from the member's side.

- Racial and gender representation

The SAMHS' intake is based on the field of interest of candidates. The researcher's assertion is that the traditional stereotypes of certain careers for a specific gender might have a role to play in influencing the career of choice for some candidates. Anecdotal evidence suggests that stereotypes dictate that professions such as nursing which are associated with qualities such as *caring and nurturing* belong to females. Males joining the profession are exposed to such perceptions which may dent their ego or their passion for the profession. At entry level, a male candidate with a passion for nursing may opt for a different mustering out of fear of being looked down upon due to his choice of field. Mismatch in placements has been demonstrated where students performed poor academically and cited being placed in wrong careers as justification for poor performance.

#### **4.3.2.3 An analysis of a policy directive**

Policy analysis in this section is based on the Department of Defence Human Resource Strategy (DOD, 2010) with specific focus on the alignment between the acquisition of human resource and employment opportunities in the SAMHS. According to the HR Strategy (DOD, 2010), a coherent strategy is needed to turn around the DOD and help it become a winning organisation, strengthened, and not burdened, by its HR corps. This once more puts the role of HR personnel in the spotlight and the importance of professionalising this service. The HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) criticises the DOD's HR management on the under-mentioned aspects which the researcher analysed in relation to the ability of the SAMHS to match HR acquisition to available employment opportunities: inability to improve output to ensure mission accomplishment, inefficient utilisation of its assets, the inability to meet stakeholder demands and its inability to regenerate itself.

- Inability to improve output to ensure mission accomplishment

Recruitment and selection processes and procedures should support the organisation's strategic HR direction. Currently the SAMHS' processes bear evidence that this is not the case as indicated by one research participant that HR acquisition is guided mainly by functional Directors who give an indication of the number of candidates they need. HR functionaries then use the criteria which indicate admission requirements for candidates following specific mustering. The main criterion centres around academic requirements and the crucial aspect, job profiling, which helps to determine the skills needed in order to guide the selection process, seems to be missing. Having an ideal candidate profile would greatly enhance the calibre of candidate selected thus contributing towards an improved output. The focus on academic achievement as a main criterion complicates the process as many candidates end up qualifying and the inevitable happens that often the number of candidates taken for various musterings generally exceeds the number needed.

Some of the processes unfold as if they were not planned for as evidenced by an example cited by one research participant referring to the intake of candidates for the clinical associates course even though that specific mustering did not have posts. At the end of the three-year course there were no posts to place the members who had just completed, resulting in extreme frustration and lodging of grievances by affected members. The problem continues as some of the members are placed in posts from other musterings and others have opted to apply to pursue medical studies. Mission accomplishment becomes unattainable as the members that were supposed to be rendering services continue to pursue other study avenues. The SAMHS should thus experience a deficit in the services that should have been rendered by a full complement of clinical associates. Because there were no posts, one cannot fault members who seek other opportunities; however, for HR acquisition the process constitutes fruitless expenditure. The justification of whether the intake was planned for or not remains with the directorate.

- Inefficient utilisation of its assets

The factor mentioned above of providing study opportunities to selected candidates without having posts for staffing them upon course completion creates massive HR

problems as those members end up being placed in funded posts of other musteringings and creating a very skew picture of SAMHS' HR structure. The ripple effect of this skewness is that the placement of members in posts of other units makes any undertaking with financial implications such as drawing subsistence and travel allowance (S&T) to be deducted from units where the members are placed. Other HR-related processes such as the registration of grievances, promotions or course nominations get compromised too as it is the "home" unit that has to account. These discrepancies depict a very inaccurate profile of what the situation is. It is not prudent for an employee to sit in *just an allocated post* as that post is aligned to specific functions and a specific rank and salary. Inaccuracies in the post establishment table make proper planning difficult. If this is projected onto personnel acquisition processes this implies that there is no way of knowing the number of personnel members needed, but also no way of knowing where the need is (which mustering). This directly implies that the skew picture leads to inaccuracies in skills needed which is supposed to inform the number of candidates needed per mustering when conducting recruitment planning and for selections.

- Inability to meet stakeholder demands

The selection process is not aligned to the number of available posts. Many candidates with good symbols apply with the hope of being afforded opportunities to study in fields such as medicine, but due to the mismatch between the number of applicants and available posts, many candidates get channelled into other fields such as clinical associate, nursing, EMMC or other health-related fields. This leads to frustration and disillusionment in those affected and once more, a lot of grievances.

- Inability to regenerate itself

The fluidity of the ideal HR strength is influenced by the number of posts available and movement of personnel, amongst other things. When it comes to the management of studies for health-related courses within the SAMHS, students sign study contracts which outline obligations on both sides. Failure to adhere to contractual obligations, such as poor academic performance after exhausting all chances given, brings into effect the termination of studies. The HR process of separating members due for termination seems to be nobody's responsibility and has never been effective, resulting in many former students sitting in students' posts even though they are not

studying and making the staffing of posts for new students difficult as their posts are already occupied by members who could have long vacated students' posts. Some candidates get channelled into non-health related streams and get placements in fields such as logistics, human resources and patient administration. Even though these are not health-related fields, they provide massive support to health-related professions in the work environment and also deserve worthy candidates selected on merit.

Personnel acquisition processes can improve drastically if executed according to HR policies, not only by HR functionaries but by all relevant stakeholders.

#### **4.3.3 Exploring alternative HR acquisition processes that can be used to improve current processes**

The discussion draws from the points of discussion above and briefly highlights ways in which HR acquisition processes could be improved, and the recommendations in the next chapter elaborate on the points of importance.

##### **4.3.3.1 Recruitment**

- Advertising and awareness campaigns

The researcher highlighted the disadvantage of using newspaper as the main mode of creating awareness about opportunities in the SANDF as this may disadvantage those already disadvantaged by their social circumstances due to lack of access. Though the research participants regarded newspaper advertising as effective, the researcher believes technological advancements are rendering newspapers redundant and the dissemination of information in today's world is mainly through electronic platforms. The majority of youngsters, including unemployed ones, have cellular phones and this mode of communication has not been explored fully as an alternative to newspaper advertisements. The usage of Wi-Fi hotspots or providing free services for certain activities such as the downloading of application forms could help improve information dissemination to all. Involvement of community leaders or youth leaders, especially in rural areas, could improve the chances of selecting the right candidates.



- Determination of the number of candidates

Research participants identified the guidelines from functional Directors as a starting point for the selection process with the indication of organisational requirements. The participants, however, could not elaborate on whether there were formal and more objective ways of determining the intake such as actual gaps in posts, post profiling or skills audit. These are measures that could be used to inform the number and qualities needed.

- Provincial representation

The HR participants alluded to the current unavailability of written guidelines on the numbers per province and guidelines being drawn mainly from historical trends. The repeated usage of the same city or town is regarded as contributing to the skewness in representivity due to failure to reach candidates from remote areas. The numbers will never be equal, and Gauteng will have more candidates, but efforts should be in place to reach members whose chances of hearing about such opportunities are slim.

- Racial and gender representation

The perpetuation of racial and gender representation was highlighted by a participant as a concern, more so that they can only focus on candidates who apply, mainly being male African. Targeted marketing and headhunting are strategies that could be used to ease this challenge.

#### **4.3.3.2 Selection**

- Admission point score

The researcher's opinion is that the move to professionalise the Force should be done across all sectors, including the HR section. Musterings such as HR and logistics have courses offered at tertiary institutions and it would only be fair to have candidates from such musterings, especially those with good Grade 12 symbols, being considered for study opportunities too. The failure to even check their APS could send a false message that they are not good enough. Awareness by candidates that their good Grade 12 results do not count at all has the potential to make some candidates divert away from fields they are passionate about, to fields where recognition is given for good academic performance.

- Psychological assessment

The psychological assessment is done during selections as a component of the recruits' health assessment to guide on their suitability for admission to the SANDF. In other services such as the Air Force and the Navy, further assessments are done on candidates who performed well to select the best for higher technical or mechanical fields; however, the SAMHS only conducts the basic Differential Aptitude Test and that, according to the researcher, reflects a gap in the SAMHS' selection process. Further psychological testing could be done to identify capable candidates with an inclination towards being people oriented. The involvement of the Military Psychological Institute in designing an appropriate tool would help improve the quality of selections by identifying candidates who are likely to succeed in the medical field.

- Selection interviews

To get the best candidates, the selection panel need to have good communication, observation and listening skills but it is also critical to ask the right type of questions. It is advisable to move away from the traditional way of questioning where only factual information is required such as *who is the Minister of Defence?*, and to adopt the current trend of asking problem-solving questions where various aspects such as language, intellect, communication, problem solving and critical thinking can be assessed through the use of scenarios.

#### **4.3.3.3 Data capturing and record keeping**

Regarding a concern raised by a participant on challenges of incorrect information, missing files or manipulation of HR documents, the usage of an electronic system will save the SAMHS time and money, but it will also ensure the integrity of HR acquisition processes. This could help minimise the risk of ethical issues and litigations. An electronic system would go a long way in addressing corrupt activities such as *selling of jobs*, a well-known phenomenon in South Africa. The availability of policies on the management of records would help, not only to guide practice, but in these days of endless litigation it could save the department the money and the embarrassment.

The challenge of the storage and retrieval of files which the researcher experienced could be minimised through role clarification. The confusion on who is responsible for records can lead to serious legal issues, especially with the challenge of missing files.

On the arrangement of information within the files it would be helpful to adopt a sequence of arranging documents in the files, which besides ease of use, would have an added advantage of identifying missing records quickly. Usage of a checklist would help HR functionaries to check with ease whether the candidates submitted all the required documents or not. The SAMHS HR system needs to improve efficiency and to use systems which will promote cost containment.

#### **4.3.3.4 Analysis of policy directives**

To improve current practice, the key focus should be on policy implementation, revealed through analysis as a critical area with most gaps. Availing policies does not assure implementation; however, providing implementation guidelines provides a foundation for conducting monitoring and evaluation processes, as well as holding those responsible for implementation to account. Implementation time frames will help determine the extent to which policy implementation is taking place, so monitoring and evaluation play a big role in promoting policy implementation and ensuring compliance.

The HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) identified strategic "*pillars*" essential for effective execution of HR processes and which, based on the researcher's analysis, could directly contribute to alternative ways of HR acquisition processes.

- **Management competency**

According to the HR Strategy (DOD, 2010), competency, which encompasses the knowledge, skills and attitude exhibited by commanders and managers, determines the quality of HR service delivery. The researcher alludes to this statement. The basis on which some of the candidates get selected for support fields such as HR sends a silent message that the field is not good enough or not taken seriously. The APS is considered for health-related courses but that is not the case with HR and other non-medical fields, and this could have an impact on the mind-set of selected candidates. For quality in HR processes to improve, those with the aptitude and the attitude should make the cut and should also know that they are the best. Opportunities for tertiary studies should guide the selection of these candidates as well. Far-sightedness during the selection process is essential as these candidates are future HR managers and

an early investment in their education will pay off through quality service delivery in the future.

- The provisioning of HR Policies

*The HR domain's regulatory framework changes all the time necessitating a revisiting of HR policies constantly at the policy formulation level to ensure relevance and comprehensiveness. The policies should be promulgated in a user-friendly manner and they should be effectively communicated, understood and executed appropriately at all levels* (HR Strategy, 2010). This touches on what the researcher is emphasising, that if policies are implemented, the HR environment will change for the better. The researcher struggled to get most of the HR-related documents, including policies, with some HR functionaries not even being aware of policies guiding their very practice. The revision dates on documents are far apart reflecting that these essential guidelines lose relevance in this constantly changing world. The move from a dominantly paper-based recruitment and selection process to an electronic-based format will go a long way in improving efficiency with HR processes as policies would be readily available. An electronic system would speed up processes, enhance communication and generally be attractive to potential entrants. HR functionaries, right from the point of entry, will be used to navigating the electronic processes with ease and thus be likely to explore and discover changes, challenges and new information on HR aspects.

- The provisioning of client-orientated HR practices

According to the HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) *the effectiveness of HR policies can only be determined by the extent of their execution*. HR functionaries need to appreciate the importance of HR processes as they touch on the lives and livelihood of all employees and thus contribute extensively to the wellness of employees. A participant appreciated the fact that as HR functionaries they are usually the first point of contact with the recruits and they should be aware that their coordination and management of recruitment and selection processes make an impression about the organisation that the recruits are about to join. The participant further orated on how other acquisition processes might not be visible to members about to join the department but evident directly to them as recruiting sections such as HR files that go missing or delays which cause the potential employees to undergo processes such as police clearance several

times due to the short validity period. The involvement of HR functionaries spans one's whole career and influence productivity. No employee will work productively if feeling aggrieved about HR processes such as leave, promotion or study opportunities.

- IT support

The HR Strategy (DOD, 2010) highlights *the need for state-of-the-art integrated IT systems to ensure efficient management and administration of the DOD's HR processes. It also stresses the need for professionalism based on the criticism levelled at the inability of personnel to cope with HR demands.* A deduction is made from the document of the possibility that HR functionaries might not realise that the quality and efficiency of their outputs have a direct bearing on the image of corporate DOD (2010). Professionalism does not just come from experience gained on-the-job, especially for new members. Education contributes a lot to the inculcation of values, ethics and the professionalism which is important to any work environment. SAMHS' selection of candidates for non-medical fields is done without consideration of the candidate's academic performance through the APS. The selection process should be stringent enough for candidates joining the HR stream and should be done with a future orientation of developing candidates at tertiary institutions. The candidates should therefore, from the onset, meet the criteria for accessing tertiary education to promote efficiency and professionalism.

Policy directives emanate from ideas of those occupying strategic positions; however, the researcher's analysis of SAMHS' various HR acquisition documents, information as narrated by HR functionaries and of HR acquisition policy directives all point to a massive gap in the implementation process. The findings suggest a disconnection along the HR processes continuum indicating that information from the top does not get filtered to those at tactical level who are charged with the task of executing those policies.

The researcher's efforts to analyse the human resource acquisition in the SAMHS yielded results that reflected challenges with HR acquisition processes and procedures, also challenges which could be attributed to HR personnel at various levels and challenges with policies, especially the lack of policy implementation. Rectification of the current situation is a mammoth task that the researcher believes

can start with the creation of awareness and behavioural change among HR functionaries through basic measures such as improving communication, attitude when assisting personnel, and carrying out processes and procedures according to guidelines. Management support is essential and direct involvement could be through creation of an enabling environment, availing guidelines and policies, coordinating HR activities and monitoring and evaluation. It is essential to recognise that there will always be aspects that impact negatively on HR acquisition processes that are beyond the control of HR functionaries and their managers, such as budgetary constraints. It is equally important to acknowledge that not all changes can be done all at once but the commitment to start small will lead to small victories which can fuel the necessary motivation to strive for improvement and gradually lead to an improved service delivery in the execution of HR processes.

#### **4.4 CONCLUSION**

The researcher analysed the SAMHS' recruitment and selection processes, data capturing and record keeping processes and policy implementation practices. The findings reveal that HR functionaries are following guidelines in place though they seem to be based mainly on historical trends. There is poor policy implementation and the researcher cannot ignore the influence of factors such as budgetary constraints. The findings guided the researcher in the formulation of recommendations which are discussed in the next and final chapter.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 CONCLUSION

The concluding remarks emanated from the findings, which, in turn, were aligned to the questions that this study was purporting to answer, and formed the basis on which the recommendations were anchored. In her concluding remarks, the researcher took into account the reality of the current HR landscape, exacerbated by poor service delivery, and identified the need for a paradigm shift as essential at all levels of service, where performance and service delivery are not only stunted by the lack of financial resources, but spun through a creative mind-set, into using available resources to the best of one's ability. The dire financial situation caused, among other factors, by the continuously declining budget, forced the Minister for Defence and Military Veterans to sound alarm bells about the SANDF's ability to carry out its constitutional mandate, the enforced downward adjustment of plans, and a constrained value proposition to the country and its people (Wingrin, 2019).

#### 5.1.1 What are the current human resource acquisition practices used in the SAMHS?

The HR acquisition process of the SAMHS which is generally done on an annual basis seems relatively effective in recruiting and selecting young South Africans, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, into its ranks. An in-depth analysis, however, revealed a process with gaps, especially around systemic issues such as adherence to applicable policies, which, if attended to, could improve efficiency.

For the recruitment process, newspaper advertising, which is the main mode of advertising used by the SANDF, including the SAMHS, possibly constrains the process it is meant to promote, contributing to imbalances in recruitment. The researcher queried the access to newspapers, especially currently with their declining popularity. Technological innovations have not been embraced to solicit and recruit suitably qualified talents despite the awareness that most of the youth, even from disadvantaged backgrounds have their own cellular phones.

The recruitment drive among provinces reflects an inclination towards Gauteng Province, which is generally expected to have more applicants, as the country's economic hub. The balancing of racial and gender representivity remains a challenge

as the pool of applicants is mainly African males, swinging the intake in their favour. Stakeholders involved in the recruitment drive need to be aware of the skew representivity picture as a starting point for addressing the imbalance.

Regarding the selection process, HR functionaries manage the process according to the SAMHS' guidelines; however, gaps which compromise its effectiveness were identified. On the administrative side, records bear evidence to the assertion that HR functionaries ensure that the necessary documents are available and completed. The researcher believes that the SAMHS' selection process would be more effective if the process could avail better opportunities for deserving candidates in the non-medical fields such as HR. The selection process is mainly academic driven, focusing on the APS satisfying the set criteria as specified by different institutions for health-related courses. The APS for non-medical musterings is not considered, thus disadvantaging these candidates as they are not afforded opportunities for immediate tertiary education. The psychological assessment needs to be more than just a basic test, but should expand to include the assessment for suitability for health-related courses. Psychological testing has the potential to discriminate against candidates from disadvantaged backgrounds and this should be guarded against.

The data capturing and record keeping practices are mainly paper-based and predispose the HR system to manipulation and corruption. The record retrieval procedure has also been found to be cumbersome, though the researcher concedes that this could partially be attributed to human behaviour. An electronic data management and e-filing system would improve efficiency extensively.

On policy directives, the interaction with front-line HR functionaries revealed gaps suggestive of routine activities carried out as informed by historical trends. The policies were not readily available and generally not consulted. There was little evidence of regular reviewing and updating of policies.

The quality of recruitment and selection has a direct bearing on the quality of service delivery, and thus on the extent to which organisational goals are attained, as aligned to the organisational strategy. The study reflects the SAMHS as set on maintaining traditional HR acquisition practices whereas the literature review revealed tremendous organisational changes in this regard. Scouting for and adopting emerging recruitment



and selection trends, such as technologically-based platforms could save time, be cost effective, and drastically improve performance and efficiency.

### **5.1.2 To what extent is there a match between human resource acquisition and employment opportunities in the SAMHS?**

Organisations should have the means to get an adequate supply of employees qualified for specific jobs. Two processes, job analysis, which lays a foundation for determining jobs to fill, and person specification, which outlines essential qualities needed for a specific job were both found to be given minimal attention for the recruitment and selection of MSDS in the SAMHS. Both processes are critical in supporting HR processes to source the best candidates.

The current process of determining intake targets seemed flawed as it is not directly linked to operational requirements, the SAMHS' capacity to train or be aligned to the allocated budget. In instances where budgetary constraints stifle HR acquisition, it would be best to drastically reduce the number of potential candidates than to skip a year without having an intake, as was the case. Not having an intake severely disrupts the cycle of HR functioning, compromises academic processes and thwarts the hopes of many aspirant youth and their families. It also confirms the notion of non-alignment between HR acquisition and available opportunities as this implies that changes in staffing patterns brought about by transfers, resignations, retirements or death did not have any bearing on the planning of an intake.

The SAMHS continues to execute its role in reducing unemployment among the youth; however, the process of attracting them is not streamlined and the process was found to be too generalised, attracting any young member who is trying to get employment. The pressure to fulfil the country's developmental mandate due to the high unemployment rate and the failure to incorporate stringent measures for recruitment and selection give credence to an assertion by Rech (2014) that the current recruitment practices are reducing the military to a commodity, further stating that this makes a soldier to become a mere employee and no longer a proud servant of a country. The motivation is changing from a military service to employment (Rech, 2014).

The findings revealed a need to streamline HR processes for an improved match between HR acquisition and employment opportunities. The incongruities emanated from a number of factors, such as selecting candidates for musterings which did not have posts, such as *Clinical Associates*, the number of intake exceeding posts available in certain mustering, not allowing potential candidates to indicate their second option for the choice of field of study, the failure to factor in the changing psycho-social circumstances and a general *one size fits all* selection approach. The lack of a purposeful annual skills audit creates a ripple effect of an inaccurate skills gap and consequently poor alignment of HR needs to the SAMHS' employment opportunities.

The SAMHS contributes significantly to the developmental efforts of the country by affording young South Africans opportunities to join the SANDF and to develop careers in general and medical fields. The acquisition process, however, is found to be informed mainly by the annual routine and very little has changed over the years. The changing landscape, including the need to professionalise the Force and the changing psycho-social norms, calls for improved HR processes in order to remain relevant and to improve efficiency. Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall (2003) advocated for continuous learning as tasks are becoming more complex and further advised on the need for recruitment and selection activities to not only be focused on specific skills and experience but to incorporate aspects such as value fit, attitudes and organisation fit. This calls for an overhaul of the recruitment and selection processes of the SAMHS but it also points to the need to have *fit for the task* HR functionaries and management. Knowledge of emerging HR trends, a critical and analytic mind-set, motivation and a positive attitude would go a long way in bringing about the much-needed turnaround strategy for the betterment of the service. This proposed shift will significantly contribute towards a better alignment of HR acquisition to available employment opportunities.

### **5.1.3 Which strategies can the SAMHS use to improve its HR acquisition process?**

Professionalising the force is generally regarded as a way of improving service delivery and efficiency. The available career options in the SAMHS' medical field offer mainly professional courses, although the choices are currently limited. Non-medical

fields such as human resources and logistics need to be professionalised as well, and this could start by ensuring that those who proved themselves capable through good Grade 12 results and other positive attributes get selected for tertiary studies in their chosen field of interest.

Research findings suggest gaps in the predominantly paper-based recruitment and selection system and a shift to an electronic-based system would greatly enhance the process. This is further supported by the anecdotal evidence pointing to the common usage of the social media by today's youth. Government support by availing free data through Wi-Fi hotspots, even in rural areas, would enhance access.

Imbalances in representation relating to the number of candidates from different provinces, race and gender are evident, with Gauteng Province being over-represented and the majority of the recruits being Black males. Awareness of the skew representivity should be the starting point to triggering mechanisms for addressing this challenge through strategies such as headhunting or targeted recruitment where top achievers from schools are offered study opportunities.

The method of conducting selection interviews influences the quality of candidates selected. Historical trends once more inform the way interviews are conducted, and the information-based type of questions which only make the candidate regurgitate memorised answers, should be abolished and replaced with problem-solving scenarios which help to comprehensively assess the candidate's ability to think critically, solve problems, communicate and where necessary, the level of efficiency in relevant technical skills.

The need to bridge a communication gap cannot be over-emphasised. A bottom-up approach is generally not embraced in the DOD, but it has a role as it helps to inform those in key positions about current tactical issues. The same principle applies for HR acquisition. During the selection process the needs and aspirations of potential candidates are often not taken into consideration creating a gap in the recruits' expectations of their potential employer and this represents a critical link in the career pathway. A carefully crafted induction programme is essential to mould identified candidates into future leaders and professionals.

On the availability, relevance and implementation of policies, the findings suggest minor challenges with availability and relevance but a lot could be done with the revision and updating of policies. A major gap was identified with policy implementation. The general South African problem of policies that are extremely well written but not implemented at all seem to be applicable here, including the failure to hold those responsible for non-performance to account. Guidelines should be formulated from the broad policies to help inform practice and improve service delivery but also to ensure protection against potential litigations.

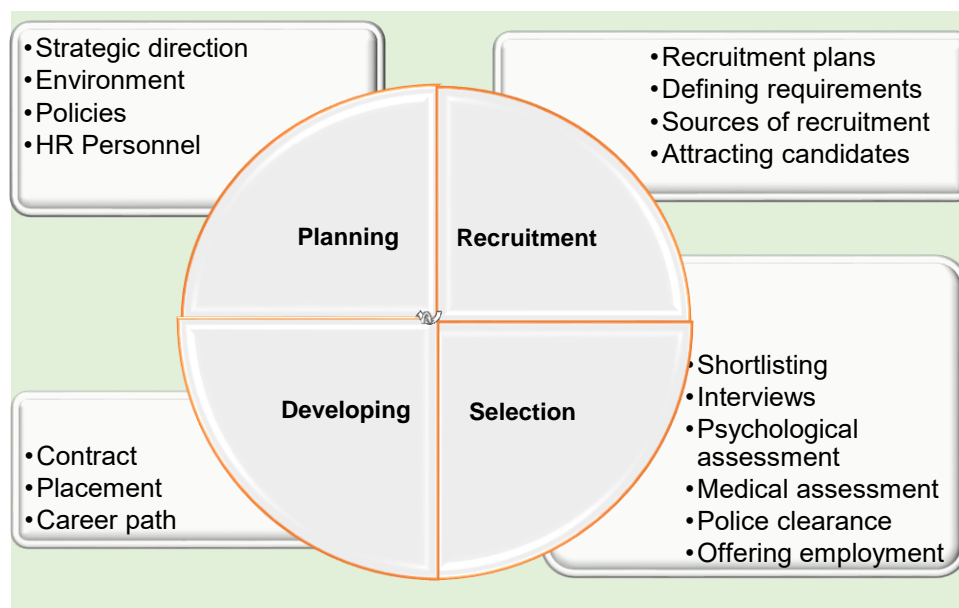
The alignment of HR activities to organisational goals will ensure the relevance of HR outputs to the organisation's strategic direction. This can only happen if those assigned to execute are capable and committed. Berman (2016) attributed the potential for success to the organisations' ability to work in unison with their HR personnel. The findings suggested that HR functionaries are actively involved and committed in their execution of acquisition process. The researcher believes that more could be done to empower HR functionaries, and that for best practice, they should not just be reduced to executing routine tasks, but should form an essential component of the team and be allowed to give inputs, make suggestions, criticise ideas, and suggest service improvement strategies. They are, after all, the ones who get to experience the primary interaction with all potential candidates. The role of HR management is critical as well, and Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall (2003) reiterated the need for HR management to reinvent itself in order to stay relevant in dealing with modern day challenges of the knowledge economy.

The key determinant of success in the HR landscape is to establish effective ways of implementing policies. All the above-mentioned suggestions will remain good on paper until such time that policies can be implemented as well as an efficient monitoring and evaluation system. Those tasked with the responsibility of policy implementation must be assessed for the level of service delivery and the culture of consequence management would inject the much-needed stimulation to enforce performance and compliance. The HR domain, like everything else, changes constantly and it is essential to ensure relevance by keeping abreast of the changing demands and forging workable relations between HR functionaries and management. Professionalising the HR domain and continuous developmental opportunities will

prepare personnel for managing a state-of-the-art, integrated IT system which is essential to ensure efficient management and administration of the SAMHS' HR processes.

## 5.2 A PROPOSED MODEL FOR THE HUMAN RESOURCE ACQUISITION PROCESS

The Human Resource Acquisition Process model in Figure 5.1 below represents an effort to improve the current HR acquisition process in the SAMHS, with an aim of demonstrating key factors essential for the streamlining of specific HR processes and how the various aspects which interact and influence each other need to be factored in to ensure goal attainment.



**Figure 5.1: A proposed model for the Human Resource Acquisition Process**

Source: The Researcher.

### 5.2.1 Planning

The sourcing of future soldiers warrants an intense, rigorous and well planned HR acquisition process conducted efficiently and effectively in line with the legislative mandate and to meet the strategic needs of the organisation.

- Strategic direction. Planning for HR acquisition should be informed by the organisation's strategic direction. An HR strategy, as a statement of intent,

provides a sense of direction and allows for recruitment and selection to take place after the HR demand has been ascertained through manpower planning.

- Environment. The strategy is based on internal and external environmental factors which influence organisational planning. HR management need to consider the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, legal, and military factors that are likely to have an impact on HR acquisition processes. An enabling environment, which includes the provision of an adequate budget and other resources, policies and related guidelines and management support is essential to enable personnel to drive HR processes. The level of service delivery relies on the quantity and quality of available resources.
- Policies. HR acquisition processes and procedures emanate from HR policies. HR management need to avail practical, policy implementation strategies with visible outputs. Monitoring and evaluation form a crucial component of ensuring compliance by those assigned the responsibility of executing and consequence management has to apply for non-compliance.
- HR personnel. The HR department is regarded as the core of existence of an organisation, managing various employee activities. Management need to acknowledge HR functionaries as the organisation's capital asset and provide guidance and support for HR acquisition processes. Professional, knowledgeable and committed personnel will project a positive image about the organisation and contribute towards organisational success.

### 5.2.2 Recruitment

Service delivery in organisations relies heavily on human resources. The recruitment process allows for the identification and attracting of potential candidates to the organisation.

- Recruitment plans. A well planned, practical and effective recruitment plan is likely to appeal to, and thus attract a greater number of applicants. Well-crafted recruitment plans will enhance the selection process and enable organisations to source the number and quality of candidates needed to meet the strategic organisational objectives at minimal cost.

- Defining requirements. Requirements have to be defined through role profile and person specification. These should be visible to aspirant candidates. Job requirements have to be defined first, after which the processes of attracting candidates can continue. The South African challenge of a relatively low-skill base due to socio-economic inequities has to be factored in.
- Sources of recruitment. Recruitment cannot just be a haphazard process. Guidelines should be available to indicate areas of interest as informed by historical trends to ensure that all the provinces are covered but also targeting rural areas. Usage of various platforms for attracting potential candidates is essential, especially the need to move towards the utilisation of electronic media. Targeted recruitment should be used to address current imbalances in race and gender representation.
- Attracting candidates. The reputation of an organisation influences the quality of candidates keen to join the organisation. All personnel involved in the recruitment process need to project a professional and positive image of the organisation to help attract the right calibre of candidates.

### **5.2.3 Selection**

The selection process starts after identifying the right calibre of candidates through the recruitment process and involves evaluating prospective candidates for future employment. The number of applicants often exceeds the number needed by far, so short listing is essential to save time and improve efficiency. The number and categories of candidates needed per mustering should be pre-determined and merit-based selection is essential within the confines of addressing representivity imbalances. Selection targets should be guided by operational requirements, services capacity for ETD and affordability within the allocated budget. Candidates identified through short-listing will go through a number of assessments including interviews, medical and psychological assessment and police clearance. Successful candidates will then be offered employment. Efficient and accurate capturing of all data form the starting point of a comprehensive career path and an integrated IT system is essential to ensure that all the information is captured, saved, protected and can be retrieved as needed.

#### 5.2.4 Development

- Contract. Acceptance of employment is endorsed through the signing of an employment acceptance form which leads to the next step of signing a contract. The type of mustering followed will dictate the type of contract to be signed.
- Placement. Placement opportunities are dependent on the candidate's chosen field. Those earmarked for studies will, in accordance with the stipulations of the tertiary institution, embark on a course on condition that they meet the set criteria. Allowing candidates to indicate a second option for their choice of mustering on the application form will make it easier to place candidates when they do not qualify for their first option or when the field can only accept a limited number.
- Career path. The expectations with regard to movement and progression within an organisation start during the pre-employment period, where the candidates are allowed to point out their expectations from the organisation. The expectations for development and career progression on the sides of both the employer and employee need to be practical and realistic. Support, induction, guidance and mentoring are essential to help new employees adapt and function to the best of their ability.

### 5.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The final chapter has captured the essence of the study, which was anchored on its aim of analysing human resource acquisition in the SAMHS. A summary of preceding chapters provides credence to this final chapter as each contributed towards, and shaped the conclusions drawn.

Chapter 1 laid a foundation for embarking on this study, which focused on one of the critical HR functions in the SAMHS, the HR acquisition process, which is a gateway through which new employees join the organisation. The reasons which prompted the researcher to do this study were indicated as well as its significance, and from these emanated the objectives and research questions. The discussion helped contextualise the study and attested that the topic was researchable.

Chapter 2 used the literature review to provide perspective on current practices in the human resources acquisition, covering concepts and content related to such practices.



The researcher presented available information on human resource acquisition, best practices, highlighted the acquisition process of the SAMHS, and discussed the process from perspective of applicable policy directives.

Chapter 3 focused on how the research had been conducted by presenting a blueprint that acted as a foundation for directing the entire research. The philosophical foundation, research approach and reasons for the choice of approach were indicated. The sampling strategy and data collection methods were discussed but also how that data would be analysed. The researcher outlined how ethical considerations were factored in to ensure that the research was conducted ethically.

Chapter 4. The core of this chapter was about presenting and discussing the quantitative and qualitative results of the analysed data, and their interpretation using tables, graphs as well as the narrative format to present the research findings.

The focus of this final chapter (Chapter 5) has been on the conclusions which were aligned to the main themes as drawn from the research objectives. The limitations for the study are highlighted next and a model proposed is presented for improving the human resource acquisition process in the SAMHS. The chapter ends with recommendations and indicates prospects for future research.

#### **5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The researcher identified the below-mentioned factors as having potential to constrain the generalisation of findings or the applicability of this research to practice.

- Time constraints: The institutional allotted time for completing the study was limited and the time pressure was worsened by the fact that the researcher could not set aside dedicated time for the study due to work commitments. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic only added to the pressure. These factors could potentially compromise the rigour of this study; however, additional time was dedicated to guard against a sub-standard end-product.
- Access to data: Analysing personal records was essential as this research focused on the acquisition process; however, the researcher's attempt to access personal records was extremely frustrating due to the lack of cooperation by HR officials who were supposed to assist, resulting in delays in accessing data.

Some of the challenges experienced include being referred from one person to the next, the storage of files being in one place whereas the people with keys and who could provide access were working from a different location and citing the challenge of unavailability of transport as well as the struggle to get the files from certain dates as specified by the researcher.

- The researcher focused on the HR acquisition process and interviewed HR functionaries; however, rich data could have been obtained had the researcher included the actual members affected by these processes as the members would have shared information directly about their own experiences.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

In its endeavour to fulfil its vision of a healthy military community, the SAMHS needs to recruit and select the best amongst the young people through a relationship which hinges on a reciprocal approach of what the potential candidate will contribute but also what the organisation can offer. Success in attaining the mission of the SAMHS lies partly in improving processes and procedures but a critical element is the relationship between the organisation and its human resources. Employees need to be recognised and supported as the organisation's human capital as their intellect, knowledge, skills, creativity, and other attributes contribute to organisational success. The importance of human resource acquisition should thus never be underestimated, and in light of this, the following recommendations are made:

### **5.5.1 Planning**

- Strategic direction. The SAMHS' strategic direction should be clear and part of the responsibilities of HR management is to ensure that the strategy is filtered down through the different levels to ensure that the tasks at tactical level are aligned to the direction of the organisation. Policy directives, especially those that inform everyday practice, need to be simplified to help guide activities. Even though a top-down approach is dominant in the military environment, a feedback system of bottom-up is essential to assist in making visible challenges experienced by those at tactical level and to provide a platform for inputs for policy changes. Feedback mechanisms such as debriefing sessions after

recruitment or selection processes will help relay critical information on the success or failure of processes to help improve performance.

- Personnel empowerment. An organisation's capability relies heavily on the shoulders of its employees, hence the referral to human resource as an organisation's biggest asset. The acquisition process thus deserves management's attention and support to ensure that the process is not compromised and that mechanisms are in place to source the best candidates. The backbone of this process is the HR acquisition section and it is only proper that those tasked with getting the best, are themselves professional, efficient and committed to the process, and more so as they often represent the candidates' first point of contact. Management support is essential through the creation of an enabling environment, ensuring that policies and guidelines are available, ensuring efficient coordination of HR activities and monitoring and evaluation of activities. Commitment to starting small such as client-centred services, improving communication, willingness to help and a positive attitude will secure small victories which, if well embraced, can lead to improved service delivery in the execution of HR processes.

### 5.5.2 Recruitment

- Intake targets. The SAMHS' recruitment and selection processes need to transform from being predominantly routine-based to evidence-based practices, informed by shortfalls in current practice as well as organisational needs as identified for goal attainment.

Determining of intake targets should be based on verifiable data, using the statistics of vacant posts as drawn from operational requirements and the SAMHS' capacity to train. This will guide the quantity and quality needed for the different musterings.

- Addressing incongruences. Several intertwined HR factors in the SAMHS have contributed to massive incongruences in the post-establishment tables, making it difficult to determine skills needed and the number of candidates needed per mustering when planning for recruitment. Conducting a purposeful annual skills audit to determine the skills gap is the starting point. The profile of each post has

to be visible and the person specification will guide the knowledge, skills and other attributes essential for the post.

- Representivity. South Africa's historical background has contributed to workplace imbalances in aspects such as race and gender representivity. Targeted recruitment aimed at addressing imbalances will over time correct the situation if done consistently. A skew picture is also evident in the representation per province, with Gauteng Province as the country's economic hub outnumbering other provinces in the number of applicants. The focus should thus be in ensuring that all the provinces are represented, including coverage of rural areas. For disadvantaged communities, improvement areas include career guidance and the school feeder system where schools assist in identifying candidates with potential. Community leaders could also help in this regard.
- Alternative recruitment strategies. The era of technology and social networking is rendering the traditional way of recruiting through newspaper advertisement obsolete. Social networking sites have gained prominence but despite these advances the SAMHS has not capitalised on the awareness that most of the youth, even from disadvantaged backgrounds, have their own cellular phones that can be used to extend the reach for the recruitment process. The HR acquisition section needs to embrace technological innovations to solicit and recruit suitably qualified talents. Government could ease the pressure of unemployment by supporting measures aimed at reducing unemployment such as the setting up of Wi-Fi hotspots in identified areas, providing subsidised data or availing free access to government job advertisement sites.

### 5.5.3 Selection

- Selection interviews. Job profiling and person specification (mentioned above), add a dimension of quality to the selection interviews through a purposeful and intentional process of structuring specific assessments aimed at getting candidates of a specific calibre. To attain this it is essential to incorporate problem-based scenarios which provide a move away from the traditional, factual question-and-answer sessions, but cater for comprehensive assessments. The level of competence required may be assessed through techniques such as skills

tests and structured interactive interviewing and the attributes assessed through cognitive tests such as personality assessments and emotional intelligence tests.

- Addressing psycho-social realities. The selection process should be dynamic but remain relevant to accommodate the ever-changing socio-economic landscape. Rejuvenation of the force calls for the recruitment and selection of young soldiers with limited social responsibilities, but the current psycho-social realities dictate otherwise as social ills such as child-headed families are becoming common and may disqualify candidates who are in such circumstances through no fault of their own. The changing psycho-social circumstances warrant the need to review perceptions about social norms. The same can be said about the education system, especially for candidates from underprivileged backgrounds, where failure to encourage science subjects, and the lack of exposure to technology are likely to impede candidates' performance. These situations disadvantage potential candidates and call for the *levelling of the playing field* by ensuring that the selection process has in-built mechanisms specifically meant to identify gaps that are beyond the candidate's control and to ensure that they are not unfairly used to disadvantage the candidates.
- Records management system. Integration of technology is a modern day necessity as traditional record-keeping practices are not sufficient anymore and modern technology exposes the process to corruption and possible litigations. An efficient electronic records management system is essential to ensure that data and all HR-related activities are well captured, safe and easily retrievable. Whilst the SAMHS is still grappling with advanced technology, diligence and commitment in the manual document management would ensure that, for each candidate, all the necessary records are available, all the information recorded, and signed where appropriate, that the files are arranged in a specific system and filed sequentially according to the filing system used. Usage of a checklist would assist in ensuring the completeness of each candidate's file. This acknowledgement and improvement of records management within the SAMHS would go a long way in improving service delivery.

#### 5.5.4 Development

- Professionalising the Force. Investing in education is one of the powerful ways of improving service delivery and efficiency. The following measures are recommended:
- Tertiary studies for HR personnel. HR management is a multi-disciplinary field and with the advent of technology and knowledge economy, investing in the empowerment and development of HR functionaries is essential to ensure quality service delivery. The available career options in the SAMHS' medical field mainly offer professional courses; however, non-medical fields need to be professionalised as well, starting from the point of entry, during the selection process. For candidates pursuing non-medical fields such as HR and logistics the researcher recommends splitting candidates into two streams, identifying youngsters who proved themselves capable through good Grade 12 results, other skills and attributes, and with potential for future leadership to be selected for tertiary studies and the second group being those who will follow the traditional way of moving up the ranks.
- Offering accredited qualifications. The ETD section needs to prioritise the recognition of qualifications of courses offered by the DOD by obtaining accreditation with the relevant accrediting bodies and aligning all the courses offered to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). This will contribute immensely to personnel empowerment as even members leaving the DOD will have portable qualifications that are registered and recognised even outside the DOD.
- Broadening options for fields of study. The SAMHS could explore the possibility of horizontal expansion as a way of professionalising the Force. Given the benefits of *growing own timber*, the researcher recommends broadening the options for fields of study and offering study opportunities to interested, qualifying candidates instead of mainly sourcing already qualified professionals to join. The medical field is broad, and given the fact that all the Military Hospitals need the services of radiographers, physiotherapists, dieticians, occupational therapists and others, all forming the core of a multi-disciplinary team, it would be prudent and cost-effective to follow this route.

- Leadership development. A selection process will help the SAMHS get candidates according to the numbers needed; however, a well-planned, purposeful and informed process will add value to the selection process. Leadership identification during the selection process is essential to cater for ongoing grooming, mentoring and support.

For identified candidates, induction plays a critical role for the instillation of values, a sense of pride and belonging, and patriotism. This future-orientated approach has the potential to assist with skills retention and it would greatly benefit the SAMHS in its endeavour to execute its mandate through effective force preparation and force employment.

## **5.6 FUTURE RESEARCH PROSPECTS**

This study focused on the *process* of HR acquisition, and, given the fact that there were human beings behind the process, candidates who were affected by the mismatch between the acquisition process and available posts, it would be beneficial and insightful to involve these members in the study. Undertaking a study on the perceptions, opinions and attitudes of the members who, for various reasons suffered the fate of the incongruences, would help inform HR management on the impact of this specific HR process. The study would adopt a qualitative approach to gain insights about the lived experiences of these members, the impact of the mismatch on them at the time of occurrence and how they coped with the situation they found themselves in. The study would create awareness on how discrepancies in HR placements impact the career path and the lives and livelihood of affected members.

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## APPENDIX A: REQUEST FOR AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM DEFENCE INTELLIGENCE

SANDC/R/103/4/1(SDSP 05/19)

Telephone: 012 674 6505  
 Mobile: 083 400 3404  
 E-mail: [peleletebele@gmail.com](mailto:peleletebele@gmail.com)  
 Enquiries: Col P.C. Letebele



SA National Defence College  
 Private Bag X1021  
 Thaba Tshwane  
 0143  
 April 2019

### Appendix A: A copy of the Research Proposal

**REQUEST FOR AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FOR A MASTERS DEGREE IN MILITARY SCIENCE: RESEARCH ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN RESOURCE ACQUISITION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY HEALTH SERVICE: 98283914MC COL P.C. LETEBELE**

### INTRODUCTION

1. I am a student on course, Security and Defence Studies Programme (SDSP) 05/19 at the South African National Defence College.
2. The course commenced on 21 January 2019 and part of the course includes a dissertation accredited by the University of Stellenbosch.
3. It is an academic requirement that all researchers obtain management approval for any anticipated research study.
4. The outcome of the Master's Degree is to become a master of a specific subject having built on the knowledge of others, with the objective on solving a real world problem. The research to be undertaken has three objectives, namely:
  - a. To analyse the current human resource acquisition practices used in the SAMHS.
  - b. To identify the link between human resource acquisition and employment opportunities in the SAMHS.
  - c. To establish strategies for the improvement of the human resource acquisition practices in the SAMHS.

### AIM

5. The aim of the study is to improve the level of service delivery in the SAMHS through the improvement of human resource acquisition practices.

## DISCUSSION

6. Research Problem. The research focuses on the effectiveness of the human resource acquisition practises within the SAMHS and the ability to match potential candidates to available career opportunities. Through the MSD system young civilian members are afforded opportunities to pursue careers in the SAMHS, however, challenges are at times experienced, such as poor academic performance, failure to complete studies or requests to change the field of study. These factors point to an HR system which is not efficient in ensuring a match between skills gap and the sourcing of potential suitably skilled candidates. The need to have recruitment and selection procedures aligned with organisational objectives is of utmost importance.
7. Research Questions. The study is guided by the following research questions:
  - a. What are the current human resource acquisition practices used in the SAMHS?
  - b. What is the link between human resource acquisition and employment opportunities in the SAMHS?
  - c. Which strategies can the SAMHS use to improve human resource acquisition practices?
8. Methodology. The study will follow a qualitative approach and a case study will be used as a method of inquiry in order to have an in-depth exploration of the human resource acquisition process used in the SAMHS. Data collection will mainly be from HR acquisition documents but will also include interviews with specific HR functionaries to get data on processes followed during the selection of candidates.
9. Ethical Considerations. The researcher will ensure that the research is conducted ethically throughout all the phases and that it complies with the highest ethical standards and confidentiality associated with the current dictates of the SANDF.
10. Your support will be highly appreciated.

*Lerebele*

---

(P.C. LETEBELE)  
STUDENT SDSP 05/19 SANDC: COL

## **APPENDIX B: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO UTILISE RECORDS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES: 98283914MC COL P.C. LETEBELE**

SANDC/R/103/4/1(SDSP 05/19)

Telephone: 012 674 6505  
 Mobile: 083 400 3404  
 E-mail: [peloletebele@gmail.com](mailto:peloletebele@gmail.com)  
 Enquiries: Col P.C. Letebele



SA National Defence College  
 Private Bag X1021  
 Thaba Tshwane  
 0143  
 May 2019

Appendix A: A copy of the Research Proposal

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO UTILISE RECORDS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES: 98283914MC COL P.C. LETEBELE**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. I am a student on course, Security and Defence Studies Programme (SDSP) 05/19 at the South African National Defence College. Part of the course includes a dissertation accredited by the University of Stellenbosch.
2. The title of my dissertation is “Analyzing Human Resources acquisition in the South African Military Health Service”.
3. The outcome of the Master’s Degree is to become a master of a specific subject having built on the knowledge of others, with the objective on solving a real world problem. The research to be undertaken has three objectives, namely:
  - a. To analyse the HR acquisition process in the SAMHS.
  - b. To establish the match between human resource acquisition and employment opportunities in the SAMHS.
  - c. To recommend alternative HR acquisition process.
4. The aim of the study is to improve the level of service delivery in the SAMHS through the improvement of human resource acquisition practices, with specific focus on the MSDS.
5. The study will follow a mixed methods approach and a case study will be used as a method of inquiry in order to have an in-depth exploration of the human resource acquisition process used in the SAMHS. Data collection will be from HR acquisition documents and the researcher will use data from records covering a period of five years, using ten files per year, thus a total of fifty HR

files.

6. The researcher will ensure that the process is conducted ethically and all the records will be handled and managed in compliance with the highest ethical standards and confidentiality associated with the dictates of the SANDF.
7. Your support in granting permission to use HR acquisition records will be highly appreciated.

*Lerebele*

(P.C. LETEBELE)

STUDENT SDSP 05/19 SANDC: COL

DISTR

For Action

D MHHR

Internal

File: SANDC/R/103/4/1(SDSP 05/19)

## APPENDIX C: REQUEST PERMISSION TO ACCESS INFORMATION FOR RESEARCH PURPOSE

RESTRICTED

SANDC/R/103/4/1(SDSP 05/19)

Telephone: 012 674 6505  
 Mobile: 083 400 3404  
 E-mail: pelotebebe@gmail.com  
 Enquiries: Col P.C. Letebele



SA National Defence College  
 Private Bag X1021  
 Thaba Tshwane  
 0143  
 27 June 2019

### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO ACCESS INFORMATION FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES: 98283914MC COL P.C. LETEBELE

#### INTRODUCTION

1. I am a student on course, Security and Defence Studies Programme (SDSP) 05/19 at the South African National Defence College (SANDC). Part of the course includes a dissertation accredited by the University of Stellenbosch.
2. The title of my dissertation is "Investigation of the match between employment opportunities and human resource acquisition in the South African Military Health Service".
3. The interest in the topic was aroused by the researcher's keenness to contribute towards the improvement of some processes within the SAMHS. Through this research one would contribute towards the improvement of the Human Resource (HR) Acquisition processes, specifically the recruitment and selection processes in order to improve the quality of candidates selected for pursuing careers within the medical field. The research to be undertaken has three objectives, namely:
  - a. To analyse the HR acquisition process in the SAMHS.
  - b. To establish the match between human resource acquisition and employment opportunities in the SAMHS.
  - c. To recommend alternative HR acquisition process.
4. The aim of the study is to improve the level of service delivery in the SAMHS through the improvement of human resource acquisition practices.
5. The researcher needs information pertaining to HR acquisition practices, specifically the recruitment and selection processes within the DOD and the SAMHS in order to complete the study. A request was made to Counter Intelligence and authority granted for the researcher to have access to DOD information on condition that there is adherence to stipulations of the Defence Act, (letter attached).
6. The researcher requests access as reflected below:
  - a. Human Resource Acquisition documents. These are documents which will be used as part of the literature review to help the researcher gain in-depth information on HR acquisition processes and procedures and will include policies, SOPs, guidelines and other document which can help with processes pertaining to recruitment, selection or both.

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- b. HR Files. This is for data collection where the researcher will go through files of candidates who went through the acquisition process to analyse the various processes undertaken and the various records used such as the biographic data, interviews, if any, social worker forms, interview documents and any other document with appropriate information. Data collection will be from HR acquisition records covering a period of five years, using ten files per year, thus a total of fifty HR files.
- c. Interviews. The researcher requests permission to interview at least two members who are involved with the HR Acquisition process to help with information on the recruitment and selection processes of the SAMHS.

7. The researcher will ensure that the process is conducted ethically and all the records will be handled and managed in compliance with the highest ethical standards and confidentiality associated with the dictates of the SANDF. No names will be used and the collection of information will be such that it cannot be traced back to the individual.

8. Your support in granting permission to access HR information will be truly appreciated.

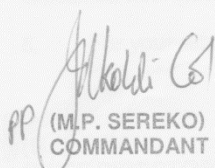


(P.C. LETEBELE)

STUDENT SDSP 05/19 SANDC: COL

## REMARKS

*Your assistance in this regard will be highly appreciated as it will assist the learner in complying with the milestones of the research.*



(M.P. SEREKO)

COMMANDANT SANDC: BRIG GEN

Date: 27/06/19

DISTR

For Action

D MHHR

(Brig Gen E.L.M. Masisi)

Internal

File: SANDC/R/103/4/1(SDSP 05/19)

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## APPENDIX D: ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL



### NOTICE OF APPROVAL

REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (SBER) - Initial Application Form

11 May 2020

Project number: 10834

Project Title: Analysing Human Resources Acquisition in the South African Military Health Service

Dear Col Pelonomi Latebele

Your response to stipulations submitted on 4 March 2020 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (REC: SBE).

Please note below expiration date of this approved submission:

#### Ethics approval period:

| Protocol approval date (Humanities) | Protocol expiration date (Humanities) |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 28 November 2019                    | 27 November 2020                      |

### GENERAL COMMENTS:

#### 1. SUSPENSION OF PHYSICAL CONTACT RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AT SU

There is a **postponement of all physical contact research activities at Stellenbosch University**, apart from research that can be conducted remotely/online and requires no human contact, and research in those areas specifically acknowledged as essential services by the South African government under the presidential regulations related to COVID-19 (e.g. clinical studies).

Remote (desktop-based/online) research activities, online analyses of existing data, and the writing up of research results are strongly encouraged in all SU research environments.

Please read the REC notice for suspension of physical contact research during the COVID-19 pandemic: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/research-innovation/Research-Development/sbecovid-19>

If you are required to amend your research methods due to this suspension, please submit an amendment to the REC: SBE as soon as possible. The instructions on how to submit an amendment to the REC can be found on this webpage: [\[instructions\]](#), or you can contact the REC Helpdesk for instructions on how to submit an amendment: [applyethics@sun.ac.za](mailto:applyethics@sun.ac.za).

#### INVESTIGATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

**If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: SBE, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.**

Please use your SU project number (10834) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

### **CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD**

You are required to submit a progress report to the REC: SBE before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

Once you have completed your research, you are required to submit a final report to the REC: SBE for review.

#### **Included Documents:**

| Document Type              | File Name  | Date       | Version   |
|----------------------------|--|------------|-----------|
| Data collection tool       | INTERVIEW GUIDE  | 04/07/2019 | 1         |
| Proof of permission        | Authority to conduct research in the DOD Col PC Letebele | 04/07/2019 | 1         |
| Data collection tool       | Data Collection Instrument 2                             | 14/10/2019 | 2         |
| Informed Consent Form      | Updated Consent Document                                 | 03/03/2020 | Version 2 |
| Proof of permission        | HR Authority Letter                                      | 03/03/2020 | Version 1 |
| Research Protocol/Proposal | Proposal Ethics Application 3                            | 03/03/2020 | Version 3 |
| Default                    | Rescheduled Programme 2020                               | 03/03/2020 | Version 1 |

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at [cgraham@sun.ac.za](mailto:cgraham@sun.ac.za).

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioral and Education Research

*National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number: REC-050411-032.  
The Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioural and Education Research complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research. In addition, this committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research established by the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and the Department of Health Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) 2015. Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.*



## Principal Investigator Responsibilities

### Protection of Human Research Participants

As soon as Research Ethics Committee approval is confirmed by the REC, the principal investigator (PI) is responsible for the following:

**Conducting the Research:** The PI is responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC-approved research protocol. The PI is jointly responsible for the conduct of co-investigators and any research staff involved with this research. The PI must ensure that the research is conducted according to the recognised standards of their research field/discipline and according to the principles and standards of ethical research and responsible research conduct.

**Participant Enrolment:** The PI may not recruit or enrol participants unless the protocol for recruitment is approved by the REC. Recruitment and data collection activities must cease after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials must be approved by the REC prior to their use.

**Informed Consent:** The PI is responsible for obtaining and documenting affirmative informed consent using **only** the REC-approved consent documents/process, and for ensuring that no participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their affirmative informed consent. The PI must give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents, where required. The PI must keep the originals in a secured, REC-approved location for at least five (5) years after the research is complete.

**Continuing Review:** The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research proposals at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is **no grace period**. Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, **it is the PI's responsibility to submit the progress report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur**. Once REC approval of your research lapses, all research activities must cease, and contact must be made with the REC immediately.

**Amendments and Changes:** Any planned changes to any aspect of the research (such as research design, procedures, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material, etc.), must be submitted to the REC for review and approval before implementation. Amendments may not be initiated without first obtaining written REC approval. The **only exception** is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

**Adverse or Unanticipated Events:** Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research-related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to the REC within **five (5) days** of discovery of the incident. The PI must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants.

**Research Record Keeping:** The PI must keep the following research-related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research proposal and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence and approvals from the REC.

**Provision of Counselling or emergency support:** When a dedicated counsellor or a psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.

**Final reports:** When the research is completed (no further participant enrolment, interactions or interventions), the PI must submit a Final Report to the REC to close the study.

**On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits:** If the researcher is notified that the research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, the PI must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.

## APPENDIX E: DEFENCE INTELLIGENCE APPROVAL

RESTRICTED



defence intelligence  
Department:  
Defence  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Telephone: (012) 315-0215  
Fax: (012) 326-3246  
Enquiries: Brig Gen T.G. Baloyi

DI/DDS/R/202/3/7

Defence Intelligence  
Private Bag X337  
Pretoria  
0001  
1 April 2019

**AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE (DOD):  
COL P.C. LETEBELE**

1. Receipt of a request letter SANDC/R/103/4/1 (SDSP 05/19) to conduct research in the DOD, as well as a research proposal attached as required is acknowledged.
2. Col P.C. Letebele – who is enrolled as a member of the Security and Defence Studies Programme (SDSP) 05/19 at the South African National Defence College (SANDC) - is hereby granted permission from a security perspective to conduct research in the DOD on the topic entitled **"The Relationship between Human Resource Acquisition and Employment Opportunities in the South African Military Health Service 2016-2018: A Case Study,"** as a precondition for an attainment of a Masters Degree in Military Science (MMIL) under the tutelage of the University of Stellenbosch as requested.
3. After the completion of the research, the final research product must be forwarded to Defence Intelligence (DI), Sub-Division Counter Intelligence (SDCI) for a final authorisation before it may be published or distributed to any entity outside the DOD.
4. Access to DOD information is however granted on condition that there is adherence to inter alia Section 104 of the Defence Act (Act 42 of 2002) pertaining to protection of DOD Classified Information and the consequences of noncompliance.
5. For your attention.

  
(G.S. SIZANI)

**CHIEF DIRECTOR COUNTER INTELLIGENCE: MAJ GEN**  
KS/KS (Col P.C. Letebele)

DSTR

For Action

Commandant SA National Defence College

(Attention: Col P.C. Letebele)

Internal

File: DI/DDS/R/202/3/7

RESTRICTED



## APPENDIX F: SAMHS APPROVAL

RESTRICTED



### **sa military health service**

Department:  
Defence  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SG/DMHHR/R/103/4/1(SDSP 05/19)

Telephone: (012) 367 9165  
Facsimile: (012) 367 9101  
Cellphone: 082 88 07544  
Enquiries: Col S.N.N. Ngqakayi

SAMHS HQ Unit  
Kasteelpark  
Private Bag X 102  
Centurion  
0046

22 July 2019

#### **PERMISSION TO ACCESS HUMAN RESOURCES INFORMATION FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES: 98283914MC COL P.C. LETEBELE**

1. Letter SANDC/R/103/4/1 (SDSP 05/09) dd 27 Jun 19 has reference.
2. In line with the conditions set out in the written authority granted by Defence Intelligence, DI/DDS/R/202/3/7 dd 01 Apr 19, for Col Letebele to access the above information from our environment for research purposes, permission is hereby given accordingly.
3. Col Letebele is therefore permitted to engage the relevant members in our Directorate to access Human Resources information relevant for her research topic entitled: ***"The relationship between Human Resource Acquisition and Employment Opportunities in the South African Military Health Service 2016-2018: A Case Study."***
4. For your further action.

(P.L.M. MASISI)  
DIRECTOR MILITARY HEALTH SERVICE: BRIG GEN

DISTR

For Action

Commandant SA National Defence Course (Attention: Brig Gen M.P. Sereko)

"Health Serving Warriors the Brave"  
RESTRICTED

## APPENDIX G: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH



UNIVERSITEIT•STELLENBOSCH•UNIVERSITY  
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

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Dear fellow participant

My name is Col P.C. Letebele and I am a student at Stellenbosch University studying towards a MMil Degree. Part of the course requirement is the completion of a dissertation and I would like to invite you to participate in a research project entitled “**Analysing Human Resources Acquisition in the South African Military Health Service**”.

Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project and contact me if you require further explanation or clarification of any aspect of the study. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

This topic is of special interest to the researcher as it aims to improve the effectiveness of the human resource acquisition practises within the SAMHS and will create awareness of shortfalls embedded within the process. As you are aware, the SAMHS provides career opportunities to young South Africans through the MSDS programme, however there are challenges with the ability to match potential candidates to available career opportunities thus rendering the recruitment and selection process inefficient. Through this study the researcher will analyse the current human resource acquisition practices, identify the link between human resource acquisition and employment opportunities in the SAMHS and recommend some strategies for the improvement of the human resource acquisition practices in the SAMHS.

The request for your participation is based on the knowledge that, as a Human Resource Acquisition Section functionary, you will have all the relevant information pertaining to the recruitment and selection of candidates in the SAMHS.

#### **Kindly take note of the following:**

Your participation will be through an interview with the researcher alone, with the aid of a voice recorder in order to capture the communication accurately and to improve interaction during the interview. The information you provide will be used for this research only and the data will be coded and stored anonymously. Your personal information, such as name or identification details will not appear on the data collection instrument as such, the information you provide cannot be traced back to you. Besides the researcher, the information provided may be made available to the academic team, such as my Supervisor or Moderator should I be requested to make it available.

Please note that this research is not invasive and there is no risk of negative experiences, harm or discomfort. The potential for any inconvenience will be the request to use your time, however, the researcher will work according to your availability, per appointment.

No payment will be made for participating in this study.

The researcher will ensure that this study is conducted ethically throughout all the phases and that it

complies with the highest ethical standards and confidentiality associated with the current dictates of the SANDF.

Your honest inputs as you share your knowledge, opinions and experiences will contribute extensively towards the success of this study

Your participation and support will be highly appreciated.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Col P.C. Letebele (Researcher)  
083 400 3404  
[peleletebele@gmail.com](mailto:peleletebele@gmail.com)

Dr K.I. Theletsane (Supervisor)  
022 702 3135  
[kitheletsane@gmail.com](mailto:kitheletsane@gmail.com)

**RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS:** You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [[mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.  
You have right to receive a copy of the Information and Consent form.

**If you are willing to participate in this study please sign the attached Declaration of Consent and hand it to the researcher.**

## APPENDIX H: DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT

By signing below, I ..... agree to take part in a research study entitled “Analysing Human Resources Acquisition in the South African Military Health Service”, and conducted by Col P.C. Letebele.

I declare that:

- I have read the attached information leaflet and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.
- All issues related to privacy and the confidentiality and use of the information I provide have been explained to my satisfaction.

Signed on .....

**Signature of participant**

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to the participant who was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was used.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Investigator**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**APPENDIX I: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS CHECKLIST****DOCUMENT ANALYSIS CHECKLIST**

| <b>No</b> | <b>ANALYSE</b>                  | <b>FINDINGS</b> |
|-----------|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1         | Title of document               |                 |
| 2         | Date                            |                 |
| 3         | Originator                      |                 |
| 4         | Type of document                |                 |
| 5         | Completeness                    |                 |
| 6         | Sequence / Order of information |                 |
| 7         | Accessibility / retrievable     |                 |
| 8         | Purpose                         |                 |
| 9         | Relevance                       |                 |
| 10        | Key message                     |                 |
| 11        | Sufficient detail               |                 |
| 12        | Implementation guidelines       |                 |
| 13        | Practical                       |                 |
| 14        | Gaps in the document            |                 |
| 15        | Areas of in-depth analysis      |                 |

[illegible]



## APPENDIX K: INTREVIEW GUIDE

## INTERVIEW GUIDE

| GENERAL INFORMATION |   |     |    |
|---------------------|---|-----|----|
| 1                   | Confirm that you work in HR Acquisition Section | Yes | No |
| 2                   | Years of experience in HR Acquisition Section   |     |    |
| 3                   | Years of experience in the HR Field             |     |    |

Kindly share your experience as an HR Acquisition functionary, providing all the details on the recruitment and selection process from beginning to end, including the preparation and processes before, during, and immediately after recruitment and selections. Identify and clarify the role of all relevant stakeholders.

**(Please note that this is an open-ended question and the interviewer will not interrupt, except where there is need for a follow-up question or to ask for clarity).**

[illegible]

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION ☺**